

The GIRL WHO
LIVED IN THE
WOODS



MARJORIE BENTON COOKE



THE GIRL WHO RAN IN
THE RIGGS



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Bobby and Omar spent hours each day with her
[Page 399]

THE GIRL WHO LIVED IN THE WOODS

BY

MARJORIE BENTON COOKE

WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLORS

BY THE KINNEYS

FOURTH EDITION



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THE GIRL WHO LIVED IN THE WOODS

CHAPTER I

THE RICHARD BARRETT'S

WHEN Anne Harmon married Richard Barrett the comment of their world was, "Ideal!" They were both young, they had independent fortunes, they were the only children of old and aristocratic families, and so their marriage seemed one of those well-arranged affairs, so rare in a world of haphazard matings.

It was, in truth, "well-arranged," for Madame Barrett and Madame Harmon had been lifelong friends, and their husbands business associates, so that Richard and Anne had been brought up from childhood to look upon the union of the two old families through their marriage as inevitable.

The two mothers were wise enough to negotiate the match while the victims were very young;

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the book of Richard's college days was just closed, when the new volume of matrimony was opened to him, and if he fretted a bit at the ready-made situation, he did not openly rebel; and as for Anne, in the flush of her first season, her marriage was just an incident, arranged by her mother as a fitting climax to the winter's gayety.

The honeymoon journey to Europe, the furnishing of the great house on the North Side, which the two families had given them, the excitement of their first entertaining — these things served to amuse them for the first six or eight months; but once settled down, with the routine of life adjusted, it soon became obvious to them both that their tastes were utterly dissimilar, that, to put it frankly, they bored one another.

Richard's friends were of a gay Bohemian sort, harmless enough in their way, but distasteful to Anne, whose friends, like her marriage, were ready-made, the daughters of her mother's friends, and fashionables of a conservative sort. Little by little the gap between these two young persons widened until it was practically impassable, and more and more they became absorbed into

their different worlds, and found their interests and amusements apart. The well-meaning and devoted mothers, who had not foreseen this crisis, attempted to adjust matters, but in vain. Anne gave Richard all the liberty in the world and demanded the same for herself, and so far as their intimates could see, they were perfectly satisfied.

Anne Barrett had entered the holy state of matrimony an immature, romantic girl, high-strung, heart-whole, her head filled with youthful ideals of happiness. While she did not really love Richard, she was thoroughly fond of him, and she fully expected that their marriage would develop in him a passionate devotion, which he was far from realizing. Their first year together was a wretched one for the girl, and she worked out the problem as best she could, alone. She felt a bitter resentment against her mother, who had been the arch mover in the plot for her undoing.

She was hurt and miserable, ashamed of Richard's frank neglect of her, and jealous of the interests that took him from her. She plunged into a round of forced gayeties, to hide her hurt, and many a night she lay wide-eyed

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until dawn. But no human being ever suspected her misery, least of all the debonair Richard, who thought her cold, indifferent, absorbed in her own affairs.

The second year of their marriage Anne gave birth to a son, and this experience, which might have brought them together, only widened the breach. Her anger at Richard's indifference to the child, plus her resentment at her unwelcome motherhood, added one more white stone along the road of her unhappiness. She handed the child, Bobby, over to an Irish servant, and paid only such attention to him as decency required. So Anne went her way, with little or no regard for the members of her household, filling each minute with some triviality, to still the crying of her heart, until six years had dragged themselves by.

"Who is that feverishly gay young woman opposite us?" asked Judge Peter Carteret of his neighbor, Mrs. Colfax, at a dinner one night.

"That is Anne Barrett. She is one of the liveliest and most popular young matrons in society now. Isn't she lovely?"

"Yes. My long vacation across the water has

The Richard Barretts

left me behind the times, you see. Who was she?"

"She was a Harmon — Anne Harmon."

"Oh, yes, William Harmon's daughter, I place her now. Is she happily married?"

Mrs. Colfax laughed.

"There is a good deal of speculation on that point, Judge Carteret. It was a marriage arranged by their parents."

"What a pity! Why do parents take such responsibilities?"

"Do you feel that it is an unwarranted presumption? Most people do, I suppose; but I often wonder if the French way is n't the better one in the long run."

"If children were puppets, it might work out, but unfortunately they are human."

"But most of us marry when we are too young to know what we want. At least our parents know what we need; that is, if they understand us at all."

"There is the difficulty; so many parents do not take the trouble to understand. That was the rock the parents of the young Barretts ran upon, no doubt."

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"It is strange about Richard and Anne. They were brought up together, and while they were never especially congenial, everybody thought it was an ideal match. But they pay no more attention to one another than if they had never been married. Of course, people talk more or less. I must say Anne has never given us the least loop-hole for gossip about her, nor Richard either, as far as that goes."

"The girl has a fine flower-like face. She looks as if she might have force."

"Force? I should doubt that. She has always been a gentle creature, ruled by her mother, and willing to drift on the tide of any one's decision, so long as she was undisturbed. She's getting a little hard, of late, with a sort of surface brilliancy. She might have developed into something if she had had a chance."

The Judge found his eyes constantly returning to the face opposite him. Keen student of men that he was, he pieced out the fragmentary story his neighbor had given him, into a fairly accurate imitation of the truth. He saw that the girl was under a strain; her eyes were too bright,

The Richard Barretts

her laugh too ready, her manner too feverishly gay. She was the centre of conversation on her side of the table, and some of her remarks floated over to him.

"How valiant wounded women are!" was his thought.

After dinner he was presented to her, and they had a few minutes' chat before the order came to get their wraps and go on to the opera.

"I think I shall not go," Anne confided to him. "I'm tired to-night. I think I'll go home instead."

"I wonder if your mother's old friend might be permitted to come along with you?"

"Would you like to, really?"

"I should like it of all things."

"All right. Let us tell our fibs, make our excuses, and escape."

"Suppose, instead, I tell the truth for both of us."

"You may, if you dare. I don't. Truth is so uncivil."

He smiled and shook his head at her, as he made his way to their hostess. A few moments

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later he helped Anne into her carriage, where she gave herself up to the pleasant feeling of being looked after.

"I'm afraid you will regret the opera, Judge Carteret. You will find me a dull substitute."

"Nothing of the kind. I choose my pleasures with unerring *finesse*; that is one of the privileges of middle age. You are tired, and you are to let me try to entertain you."

"That will be an experience! Women always have to bear the brunt of social chatter. Men so seldom trouble to help."

Arrived at the house, she turned away from the drawing-room with a smile.

"I feel as if you were not a drawing-roomish sort of person. Let us go into the library, where there is an open fire."

"Thank you, Mrs. Barrett, that is a very pretty welcome," he answered, as he followed her.

She sank back into the chair he drew forward for her without a word, and he stood before the fire, looking down at her from his fine height, his keen aquiline profile thrown into high light when he turned his head. He ran his hand over

his shock of gray-black hair and smiled at her quizzically.

"I am trying to catch up. It seems only a minute ago, that you were little Anne Harmon, in a short frock and bobbed-off hair, allowed in the drawing-room for tea. And here I find you a grown-up matron, and head of this elaborate *ménage*. It makes me feel quite antediluvian."

"I fancy you're the ageless sort — no age — all ages," she replied, looking up at him speculatively.

"That's good of you," he laughed, "but accuracy compels me to admit that forty-five long years have rolled over my head."

"That's young. I feel ages older than that."

"It's one of the penalties of youth that we pack all the great experiences there — love, marriage, parenthood. Youth is the harvest time of joy or misery; it is no wonder that sometimes life drags slowly then."

Anne looked at him inquiringly. Had he pierced her mask, this kind, strong man? She did not much care; the thought of his counsel was healing.

"I suppose you are all right, if you just live

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through it. Youth is something to get over, like the measles and the mumps."

"My dear child," laughed the Judge, "from my standpoint, I look back on those acute sensations, even of pain, with joy. The apathy of matured sensibilities is like — why, it's like a shrivelled right hand."

"It is hard to believe that I shall ever look back to this with joy. And yet, your present always seems the worst, does n't it? The future and the past are the only pleasant things."

"My present happens to be rather a pleasant one. I've had some years of poking into the old treasures of the world, and I've come back to take up my work again, with a rested and a placid mind."

"Yes, that sounds pleasant. It's all worked out up to the completion. It is the working out that is so hard — getting your life shaped."

"Exactly. And how have you shaped yours, little Anne Harmon?"

"I have n't shaped mine at all, I have let other people do the shaping; and that is the weakness I now seek to overcome. I am trying to reshape

The Richard Barretts

it, and I live on a loaded mine that may go off at any minute."

"Restful feeling! How long have you been married, Mrs. Barrett?"

"Six years, Your Honor."

"Children?"

"One boy."

"Age?"

"Four years."

"Healthy boy?"

"I fancy so."

"Fancy so? Don't you know?"

She flushed at the blunt question.

"I do not see very much of him. He is in charge of a capable woman, and I am so busy all the time with other things."

"Of course," responded the Judge, and Anne blushed again.

"You and your husband have a busy social time of it, no doubt."

"Yes — rather."

"I am sorry not to meet Mr. Barrett. I used to know his family very well."

"Of course, you must meet Richard. I'll

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try to get you to agree on a night and dine with me."

"Thank you, I should be delighted. And now I must say good-night. You were kindness itself to let me come home with you."

"I'm indebted to you for coming. I have n't many friends, Judge Carteret, and somehow I needed one to-night."

"Good. Let us make a compact here and now, that whenever you feel that want creeping over you you will send me a note, and I will appear like the genie of the lamp."

"Thanks, but that would be a one-sided arrangement, I'm afraid. I can give you so little in return."

"You can give me your trust, your confidence, and your friendship — three things I should cherish, my friend."

"Then it is a bargain, Judge Carteret."

"Thank you. Pleasant dreams!"

He smiled at her, and bowed over the hand she gave him.

"You won't forget about that dinner? I shall be at the Union Club until I find a permanent abiding-place."

The Richard Barretts

"I shall not forget. Good-night, Judge Carteret."

When she heard the door close behind him, Anne started upstairs.

"Your trust, your confidence, and your friendship!" It would be satisfying to give them to such a man, to feel that he understood always, and was there to help. Those other words of his about the boy flashed across her mind, and on the impulse she turned into the nursery and leaned over him. There is an irresistible appeal to all women in sleeping babyhood, and it was perhaps the first time in his four neglected years that little Bobby had really attracted his mother.

"I 'm glad you 're a man-child," she whispered to him. "At least, you shall never have cause to blame me for such illusion as I have known."

She covered him carefully and kissed him before she went on to bed.

CHAPTER II

PARTNERSHIP

THE day after the Judge's visit, Anne lunched at home, with a rare visitor, her husband. It was so unusual a thing for Richard to come in for lunch that Anne wondered what he had on his mind.

"Hello, Nancy," he said gayly, as he joined her. "Surprise party, ain't I?"

"Yes. Are you ill, Richard?"

"No. Not ill — just a little off my form."

She noticed how white and dry-lipped he looked as he sat down at the table.

"Better see Dr. George; you look seedy."

"I'll be all right," he said. He ordered the man to bring him a brandy and soda, and the noon edition of the papers, and to have him called in case he were wanted on the telephone.

"What's the news with you, Nan? Thought you were going to the opera with the Van

Partnership

Croyden's last night. I looked in about ten but I did n't see you."

"I did n't go. I came home and brought a Judge Carteret with me."

"Carteret? New slave? Is he the old boy who went on some diplomatic mission for the President, and has just come home, with trumpets and drums?"

"That's the man. He is charming. He wants to meet you, Richard. I told him we would have him to dinner. What night have you free next week?"

"Oh, I don't know. Don't let's talk about that now," he said absently. "Why the devil does n't Hobson bring me that paper?"

"He had to send out for it. Is there anything the matter, Richard?"

He rose and started for the door, then came back, nervous and absent-minded.

"What is it that you are worried about?" Anne persisted.

"It's nothing — I'm all right."

He sat down and looked at her intently.

"We don't see much of one another these days, do we, Nan?"

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“No.”

“I guess I have n’t made you much of a husband.”

She looked her frank surprise.

“You may feel that I have n’t made you much of a wife — but what do you expect of a marriage like ours?”

“Like ours?”

“A mockery, arranged for us without our desire or interest.”

“Well, we liked each other well enough at the start, did n’t we?”

“No, we did not. Worse than that — we had nothing in common to begin with, and our way of life precluded our being forced to have any common interests.”

“That’s the truth, Nan. I suppose I might have gone your way a little more at the start, but your crowd bored me as much as mine did you.”

“Why talk about it now? We both have our own interests, and that is enough.”

“It would be pretty tough on you if anything happened to take away these interests and force us back on each other?”

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“What could happen to do that? We have never been forced to do anything we did not want to, Richard. That’s the trouble with us,— we’ve always had too much of everything — too much of all the things that do not count, and the things that do count have been crowded out.”

“What are the things that do count?”

“Love, toleration, generosity, forbearance.”

Richard looked at her in surprise, then he went around and stood behind her chair, and leaned over her with unusual tenderness in his voice.

“It’s too late now, is n’t it, Nancy?”

“Oh, yes, it is too late now, I suppose. Life is so full, and habit so masterful.”

He turned away and walked up and down the room, his head bowed in thought. He looked at his watch and exclaimed angrily, “Where has Hobson gone with that paper?”

“Is there something in the paper that worries you?”

“Did you see the morning edition? There’s a panic on the Board.”

“Have you lost some money?” indifferently.

“Yes — we’re — I’m in pretty deep. My

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brokers will cover if they can, but it looks pretty squally."

Hobson entered with the paper, and Richard almost snatched it in his eagerness. He dropped into his chair, and unfolded it nervously.

"My God!" he said, and half rose.

"Richard, let me see it. What is it?" Anne demanded.

"I'll tell you later — I've got to go."

He rushed past her and out of the room, leaving her in the dark as to his intention and his destination. She knew he was overwrought, for Richard never grew introspective unless he was in a scrape of some kind. If it was only money, she told herself, it was no matter. They had more than enough, and he could afford to lose gracefully.

"I wonder if our money is the cause of it all," she mused. "If we had loved one another and been poor, who knows what life might have meant to Richard and me."

She went about her afternoon duties, with only an occasional thought of their talk at luncheon. On her return to the house she found that her husband had called her several times

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on the telephone, but had left no message. She could not get him at his office, so she decided he was on his way home. When she was dressed to go out for dinner, however, she sent her maid to find out whether he had come in, and his valet replied that he did not expect Mr. Barrett. Anne called his favorite club, but he had not been there all day.

She went off with a vague feeling of alarm. The table talk did not distract her thoughts, for it was mainly of the day's panic on the Board, and the havoc already wrought. They told tales of fortunes wiped out, of men who wept and shrieked impotently on the floor, of one capitalist who was reported crazed by his losses. The air seemed heavy with catastrophe, and Anne could scarcely repress her nervous anxiety until the dinner was over.

She went at once to the telephone and called up the house and the University Club again, but nothing had been seen or heard of him; so she decided to go to the theatre with her friends, rather than spend hours of anxious waiting for him alone at home.

It was a gala night of one of New York's

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big successes, "The Whirlpool," and a brilliant house assembled at the theatre. The play was a study of the modern American husband and father in his relations to the world of business and to his family. The story dealt with a man married to an ambitious, selfish woman, who constantly nagged at him for money and more money. Slowly and inevitably the man is pushed into a corner, where he must either face ruin or sacrifice his personal honor; and in the supreme crisis his love for his unworthy wife proves his undoing, and honor the price he pays.

The plot was neither new nor striking, but the treatment was polished, illuminating; it threw a veritable searchlight upon the present-day conditions which grind a man between the millstones of affection and expediency. The moral struggle of this man, to hold fast to his integrity, was vividly wrought out by the playwright, and wonderfully revealed by the actor. Each step down was so inevitable, so understandable, so human, until at last he slid into the whirlpool of defeat, that is fed by the waters of oblivion.

The effect of the play on the audience, already

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keyed to a high pitch by the events of the day, was marked. There was the breathless hush of closest attention while the play was in progress; but when the curtain dropped on the first act, the reaction was instantaneous. The men all hurried out to get the latest editions of the papers, and the women fluttered and laughed shrilly.

“The Whirlpool” was a trifle too apropos just at this crisis. There were too many men in the audience who were making the same fight that the hero of the play was engaged in; too many glimpsed the final defeat that had engulfed him. At the end of the last act the audience rose and dispersed in a silence that was oppressive. Anne’s party were to have supper at the Annex, but she excused herself and went home.

She apprehended that the day had had serious consequences for Richard, perhaps for both of them. Here was something she might help him with; for Richard had never had to bear any defeats, and she foresaw his boyish collapse in the event of trouble. She faced possible disaster with welcome in her heart if only they might share it together.

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The servant at the door said that Mr. Barrett had just come in. He had asked for his wife, and then shut himself up in the library. Anne threw off her cloak and hurried there. Richard lay in a crumpled heap on the couch, face down, as he had thrown himself half an hour before. One hand hung limp to the floor, and his head rested on the other. On the table in reach of his hand, lay a toy that shone brightly. For a moment Anne's heart stopped beating.

"Richard! Richard!" she cried.

She knelt beside him and tried to turn his face toward her. He roused himself dully, sat up and faced her. She sank back in fright when she saw how old and haggard he looked. She touched him to attract his wandering, dazed glance.

"Richard, what is it?" she said gently.

"It's you, Nan, isn't it?"

He got to his feet and lifted her up so that she faced him.

"We're done for, Nan," he said simply.

"To-day has cleaned us out."

"You mean you lost heavily in the panic?"

"I mean we lost everything."



She knelt beside him and tried to turn his face toward her

Partnership

"It does n't matter; I 'll lend you what you need. Why should you take it so to heart?"

"You can't lend me anything, Anne; it's all gone, yours too. I risked all mine, and I tried to recoup with yours, and there's the end of us."

"You used my money too?" incredulously.

"Yes. I tried to get you by phone this afternoon, and I could n't. I had power of attorney, you know, and my brokers said I might pull out, if I had the money at once; so I took it. That's all."

She went away from him and sat down and waited for the rest.

"There is nothing that you can say or think that I have not said to myself. I'm a gambler and a thief. I stole your money, just as surely as if I'd broken in at night, and I know I've forfeited what little respect you ever had for me."

She turned and pointed at the shining thing on the table.

"Yes, coward too. I even thought of that. I've been in hell these last few hours since I faced myself. It seemed as if I might get out

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of your way — it was the only thing I could think of."

"I'm glad you spared me that shame."

"What little manhood I have left balked at that."

"Why did n't you go to my father, or yours?"

"I could n't bring myself to do that. They settled our inheritance on us when we were married, and I made up my mind I would not go whining to them."

She looked her surprise and nodded her approval.

"I think you did right in that."

"I can pay for my folly; but the pity of it is I've dragged you into it too."

She came and stood opposite him.

"I don't care about myself."

"I'll make up every penny I took, Nan."

"Please, we won't talk of that now."

"Yes, we must talk of it. Bobby has to be thought of."

"Bobby?"

"I've risked his education and his whole future, and I must make it up to him. When we

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get things cleared up, you and he can go to your people for a while till I get a start. Or perhaps you 'd rather go for good, Nan, and be rid of me?"

"That is unfair, Richard, as well as unkind. Shall we have anything left at all?"

"This house and the country place. They ought to bring enough to make you comfortable for a while."

"We 'll have to sell Hillcrest?" she cried.

He turned away and leaned his head on his arms.

"Oh, Nan, Nan, how can you ever forgive me?" he moaned.

She laid her arm across his shoulders.

"I don't mind! Really I don't mind losing the money, but I can't let you lose your own respect for yourself. You must pay it all back, even to me; only let's bear this trouble together, dear. Let Bobby and me be your partners. Just think at every step, 'Now I must do this or that, because my partners depend on me to do the right thing,' or, 'I'll face this out, so those partners of mine will be proud of me.'"

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He turned and took her in his arms, the tears rolling down his face.

“Nan! Nan! God bless you, dear! I can’t say —”

He broke down and wept bitterly, sobbing like a man torn with suffering; and for the first time in her life Anne Barrett took her husband’s head upon her breast to comfort him, and her face was that of a Valkyria bearing her wounded warrior to Valhalla!

CHAPTER III

THE READJUSTMENT

THAT fatal day on the Board of Trade has gone into history as a record-breaker, and it was the ten days' wonder of the time. Many fortunes were lost, and the trend of many lives was changed by the outcome of that one day.

Possibly the most discussed of all Misfortune's victims were the Richard Barretts. Tongues had wagged so busily before this disaster as to what the outcome of their open indifference to one another would be, that this added tidbit of financial ruin offered a welcome opportunity to old Dame Gossip. Of course Anne Barrett would divorce Richard now; the Harmons denounced their son-in-law as a rascal; he had forged his wife's name in order to save himself with her money; she had come to his rescue at the last minute with her fortune to save his honor — and so tongues clacked, and the stories grew.

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As for the victims themselves, after the first shock was over they took up their problem and insisted upon solving it for themselves. Both the Harmons and the Barretts rushed to the rescue with offers of help and advice, both of which Anne and Richard firmly but gently refused. In family council Richard made a clean breast of it all, nor did he spare himself in the telling. He made clear to them the step he and Anne had determined upon, and he explained that they would sell the two houses to pay their creditors. They would, however, retain the Lodge at Hillcrest and make that their home.

At this point both the mothers-in-law burst out in indignant protest. Why, they demanded, with two town houses and two country places in the family, should their children banish themselves to that stuffy Lodge at Hillcrest?

"Why, Anne, you could not have more than two servants in the place to save your life," Mrs. Harmon objected.

"The fact is, we mean to have only one," smiled Anne. "Mrs. O'Brien is to be installed as sole ruler of the Lodge."

The Readjustment

"No chef, no maid, no nurse — how can you get along?" Mrs. Barrett demanded.

"Think how many women never have any of those things. Are they so much cleverer than I am? I shall take orders from Mrs. O'Brien. I shall learn to dress myself, and to take care of Bobby."

"Take care of Bobby? But you don't know how," her mother objected again.

"I can learn, can't I? Bobby and I are going to get really acquainted this summer. We have had only a bowing acquaintance so far."

"It is the most absurd thing I ever heard of in my life!" Mrs. Barrett burst out. "Richard, I should not think you would permit Anne to undertake such a thing."

"This is Nan's own idea. I did n't want to do it. I begged her to take Bobby and go abroad with some of you for the summer."

"Once and for all, I, Anne Harmon Barrett, choose to do this thing of my own free will. I've never made up my mind on anything before; and I warn you that from now on I'm a free agent. I choose to make a home for my husband and my boy within the limits of

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Richard's income. It makes me ashamed to have you all so surprised and horrified at my deciding to stand by and help him out. I'd be a coward to go away and leave him to fight it out alone. No, we are going to work this thing out together, and we will not accept one penny from anybody; although we thank you from the bottom of our grateful hearts."

There were tears in Anne's eyes, as she concluded this longest speech of her life; and Richard put his hand on her shoulder and spoke up proudly.

"Is n't Anne great?" he said.

"Let the children alone," said Barrett Senior bluntly. "This may be the best thing in the world for them. Richard begins work with me the first of next month, on a nominal salary until he is some use in the business."

"Henry, I never thought you were a hard man before," wept his wife.

"Hard? Stuff! I am just; and when a man plays the fool he pays the piper. That law won't be set aside for Richard, just because he's our boy, Jane. He's gambled and squandered what it took me years of hard work to make, and

The Readjustment

now he'll atone like a man, or he gets no help from me. There's no snap open in my office."

"I'm not looking for a snap, and I'm grateful for the opening, father," said Richard; and his mother stared at him in astonishment.

"When do you expect to make this insane move?"

"As soon as we can dispose of the two places," Richard answered. "We shall have no trouble about selling this house, of course, but it may be difficult to find a buyer who is willing to let us keep the Lodge at Hillcrest. Both places go on the market to-morrow, and we hope to settle up shortly."

"I'm counting on moving to the Lodge in May," Anne said. "We shall have to make a few changes in it, to make it accommodate our family, but if we begin at once we can get in some time in May, we think. Richard and I have been working at the plans."

"If you must have a lodge, why don't you take ours at Pine Grove?" asked her mother. "That is twice as big as the one at Hillcrest."

"We like the one at Hillcrest better, thank you."

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"What will you do with the furniture in the two houses?"

"Sell what we can to the buyers, and the rest at auction," Anne replied.

"Auction?" cried her mother. "Auction? Why, Anne Harmon, we've never had such a thing in our family before."

"Stuff! There's no disgrace in an auction," said Barrett Senior. "A very wise decision, Anne."

"We'll never let it come to that," Madame Barrett announced. "What they can't sell in the houses, we'll divide among us."

"No charity, please," Richard protested.

His mother began to weep.

"It's a pity that your own mother can't be allowed to buy things from you, when you need money, without being talked to like that!"

"Oh, mother!" Richard pleaded, trying in vain to soothe her.

Barrett Senior arose angrily.

"Look here! It strikes me that these young people of ours have planned their own business pretty well without our interference, and they're acting in a decent, sensible manner. We're

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doing our best to make them act like silly fools, and I move we let 'em alone."

"You're not a mother, so you can't understand," sobbed his wife.

"Well, hang it, I'm a father, ain't I? I've got some right to my feelings in the matter, and I say I'm proud of 'em, the way they're going at this thing. Richard has played the part of a silly irresponsible boy long enough; and if this is going to make a man of him, what are you crying about?"

"Hear, hear!" laughed Anne; but the mothers-in-law wept bitterly and refused to be comforted.

"Please, please, don't feel so badly about it. Why, I'm actually glad!" said Anne. "I want Richard to square himself with all our creditors, and then we're going to begin again; and this time maybe we can make a go of it. We've let you take all the responsibility of our lives for us, up till now; and from this time on we are going to see what we can do for ourselves. I'm sick to death of this big house and the formalities of the life we lead, and I'm going to be very happy in that cottage; so don't you be sorry for me."

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She laughed and shook her weeping mother gently.

"I'm sure your father and I always tried to do our best for you. We had no intention of trying to run your life for you, as you call it."

"We certainly did not, my dear," said gentle old Mr. Harmon, speaking for the first time.

"Don't you think I know that? I'm not reproaching you, my dear people, for what you've done, I'm only telling you what an impotent, unthinking creature I have been, refusing my own responsibilities. You should have pushed me out of the nest long ago, and made me fly."

A diversion was introduced here by Bobby, who for once had outwitted Mrs. O'Brien and now came marching into the midst of this tearful assembly. He inspected them seriously a moment, and then went to each of his weeping grandmothers, patting them gently.

"Poor gwan'ma! don't cwy; Bobby take care you."

When his endearments only aggravated the weeping he turned to his mother. "Did you punish my gwan'mas?"

She shook her head, and Richard went over

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and took his hand. "Daddy has punished your grandmas, Boy. Will you help him to make them glad again?"

"Yes, me will," his son answered seriously.

He turned and ran out, and when they had almost forgotten about him he came back, a big Teddy bear in his arms, and a woolly lamb dragged after him.

"Nice gwan'ma," he said to Madame Harmon, "Bobby give gwan'ma a Teddy bear if she won't cwyl."

He repeated the formula to Madame Barrett, with an offer of the lamb, and perforce they all laughed, and the solemn conclave broke up much more cheerful than any one could have expected.

Among all the notes and letters of sympathy and affection that came to Anne, the one that spoke most directly to her heart was a line from her new friend, Judge Carteret. He wrote:

"My dear Friend:

"If happiness were wrapped up in your money, I should mourn your loss most bitterly, but as it is I find myself rejoicing. Will you understand that, I wonder?"

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Anne carried it about with her for days, and felt a thrill of pleasure at the thought of its frank interest. They were difficult days to get through, those days of late winter, with so many problems to decide, such a complete change of life to provide for. At first she felt that she and Richard had come close to one another at last, and that they would be constantly together, helping one another to decide each step. But after the first few days she saw as little of him as in the past. They both were conscious of a new element in their relations when they did meet, but the settling up of their affairs took all of Richard's time and attention, and at their occasional dinners together he was distraught and unsatisfactory. So the little flame of hope that had leapt up in Anne's heart died, and was laid away with a sad "*Hic jacet.*"

"Richard, I have asked Judge Carteret to dinner to-morrow night. I hope you can arrange to be at home."

"I've got a dinner on with Holt, Nan; can't you let me off?"

"Let you off? I fancied I was giving you a

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pleasure. Don't think of coming if you have anything else on."

He glanced up in surprise at her hurt tone.

"I'll call Holt up and try to put it off. It was a business engagement. What is it about this old boy Carteret that makes such a hit with you?"

"Let me know as soon as you find out, please," she answered coldly, and Richard knew that he had offended her. It flashed across his mind that her interest in this unknown man, rather than his careless words, had caused her annoyance. To do him justice, he was not a jealous husband; he did not love Anne enough to bother about her fancies for other men, but it suddenly came to him, that he knew as little about her inner life and her preferences, as he would had she lived in China. That Carteret was a well-born, brilliant, and distinguished man he knew from hearsay, and he felt a distinct thrill of annoyance that these traits had apparently fascinated Anne. He called off his dinner with Holt the minute he reached town, and sent Anne word that he accepted her invitation.

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The next night, when Judge Carteret was announced at seven o'clock, Richard had not put in his appearance, and it was a thoroughly indignant Anne who descended to meet the Judge and apologize for his host's non-appearance.

It was the first time she had seen him since their first meeting, and she dreaded lest the second encounter should prove a disappointment. She found him standing in the middle of the drawing-room, big, strong, distinguished looking, and wondered that she had not thought of his striking good looks before. Something in his face made her put out both hands, as to an old friend.

"I am so glad you 've come," she said.

"I am so delighted to be here," he smiled back. "I began to fear that this promised dinner was to be a mental dissipation only."

Anne laughed.

"It should have materialized before, but I have been waiting on Richard, and now it seems that I might have spared myself the pains, since he has been detained in town after all. So much has happened to us, since I saw you —"

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"Dear lady, I do not mean to reproach you. That would be a graceless trick in a guest."

"I think I quite like your impatience, and I liked your note; it helped me greatly."

"Good! You did understand me, then. I thought you would. I feel that you are the material out of which fine things may be moulded, my friend, by the hammer of necessity and the chisel of experience."

"I suppose I am the sort that luxury makes a weakling."

"I think all of us need to lose the unessentials to discover the essentials."

"Yes, I think that too. I shall treasure your congratulations at my loss, and when I make this discovery of the essentials, I shall look for further felicitations."

"You shall have them, and welcome."

"Thanks. I think we shall have to excuse Richard, after all," she said, as the clock chimed.

"I regret that our meeting must be postponed. I suppose Mr. Barrett is much engaged these days."

"Yes, he is trying to arrange for the sale of

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our two houses, and there is much tiresome detail."

"You must hate to see your homes go."

"Strangely enough I do not seem to have any feeling about this house at all, but I feel terribly about losing Hillcrest. You see, my parents gave it to me as a wedding gift, and we spent part of our honeymoon there. I suppose the most practical of women have a few cherished illusions about honeymoon days."

At this moment Richard hurried in, red with haste and annoyance, from his hasty toilet.

"Evening, Nan. Sorry to keep you waiting, but it could n't be helped."

"It's all right, now that you're here. Judge Carteret, this is my husband."

The two men sized one another up in a glance, as they shook hands.

"Glad to meet you, Judge Carteret," said Richard, none too heartily.

"It is an especial pleasure to me to meet you and your wife, since I knew you both as younglings. I have had the privilege of renewing my friendship with both of your families."

"Indeed?"

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Dinner was announced and they went out to the dining-room, where the *diner à trois* could scarcely be called a success. Anne and the Judge kept things going, and Richard played the sulky Achilles, to his wife's amazement and annoyance.

The Judge was charming; he talked of his adventures in out-of-the-way places, he told anecdotes of famous people he had met, he described some extraordinary situations in which he had found himself. It was evident he was making an unusual effort to be agreeable, and still Richard sat by and watched the performance as a distant and perfunctory outsider. Anne had never seen him act so, and she did not know what to make of him.

They had their coffee brought into the library, and as they entered the room, the Judge picked up a photograph from the table and smiled down at it.

"That is our little boy," Anne said.

"Yes, Master Bobby and I are friends," he answered.

"Friends?" in surprise.

"Yes. We've met several times in Lincoln

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Park. I often walk out there in the afternoon, and a week or so ago I met the most irresistible old Irish woman, who sat down on a bench beside me."

"Mrs. O'Brien?"

"The same. In the minute we felt the flash of souls akin," laughed the Judge, "and plunged into conversation."

"Is n't she a character?"

"She is delightful. Presently Master Bobby demanded her attention, and his likeness to you suggested his identity. So when I found I was right, I offered my credentials as an old friend of his grandparents and a prospective friend of his parents, and Madame O'Brien graciously admitted me as a proper associate for His Highness."

"Why, of course, how stupid of me not to have guessed. She described you to me, but she called you 'Judge Parker,' so I never thought of you."

"We have met several times, and Robert and I go for a voyage of discovery together, around the pond. I find your son quite a personality."

Richard was more irritated every minute.

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The idea of telling his own father what kind of a kid Bobby was!

"Bobby is rather young for such a long descriptive noun, is n't he?"

"Think so? I have a theory that the fine flower of personality lies in the bud, even in infancy. I have many baby friends, and I find them quite as individual as my maturer companions. They have the advantage of an absolute honesty in the expression of themselves."

"I think, Richard, we both have to confess that we have not concerned ourselves much with Bobby's personality."

"That's true enough, I dare say. Now that the Judge recommends him as a companion, I must look him up."

Anne hastened to cover up his covert incivility.

"In the smaller quarters of our new home, we shall get into closer touch with Bobby."

"May I ask what are your plans, after you give up this house?"

"If we can get some one to buy Hillcrest who will allow us to keep the Lodge, we shall go there to live."

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"I see. Hillcrest is up the North Shore — Lake Forest way — is n't it? Is it formally in the market?"

"Yes, and no," Richard replied. "I'm feeling around a little. Of course, if we keep the Lodge, we'd like some one we know in the big house, who would be more or less congenial."

"I wonder if I could qualify as a possibility?"

"You, Judge Carteret?" cried Anne. "Oh, that would be too perfect!"

"I have several prospective buyers," Richard remarked.

"But, Richard, the Judge would be such an ideal neighbor."

"No doubt. I cannot, however, turn down a man I have been negotiating with, because my wife thinks some one else would be a more desirable neighbor."

"Possibly you will give me some time at your office to-morrow, and we can talk it over. I have decided to buy outside of the city, and I remember that the site of Hillcrest is very beautiful."

"It certainly is," Anne said. "The house stands on the highest point of ground, over-

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looking the lake, and the woods shut it in on three sides."

"And the Lodge?"

"The Lodge is tucked away in the woods, just off the main driveway, and there are lovely bits of water and sky to be seen from all its windows."

"But is it large enough to accommodate you?"

"We think so, with care and planning. The gardener, for whom the Lodge was built, fortunately had a large brood of children, so it is larger than most lodges."

"It sounds charming and just the place for you. At what time to-morrow may I see you, Mr. Barrett?"

"To-morrow is full for me; I can see you Thursday at eleven," Richard said ungraciously.

"Thursday at eleven, I shall be there. And now I must say good-night, and thanks for this pleasant evening. I am glad to have met you, Mr. Barrett. I hope we may see something of one another. Possibly you will lunch with me Thursday, after our talk."

"Much obliged, but I'm busy Thursday noon. Good-night, Judge Carteret."

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Richard rang for the man to see their guest out, and stood moodily before the fire after his departure.

"What on earth possessed you to act like that, Richard?"

"Like what?"

"You were positively rude to him."

"I don't know what you call rude. I certainly hope I know how to treat a man in my own house. I don't like the man, but I made some effort to conceal the fact."

"You certainly failed nobly. You wouldn't talk, you were curt when you said anything at all, and you were actually uncivil about Hillcrest."

"Well, he's the last man I want to stumble over every time I put my head out of the Lodge."

"What is it you dislike about him?"

"Everything. He's too affable; he's too stuck on himself; too take-you-for-granted-because-he-knew-your-parents; and he's too blamed devoted to you."

"To me? To me!"

Anne could not believe her ears, for a minute;

and when she did convince herself she had heard aright, she threw back her head and laughed, and laughed.

"That is the most ridiculous thing I ever heard you say in my life! Why, he's forty-five years old—twice my age; he told me so himself. Why on earth should n't he be devoted to me? I just love him, he's so strong and kind and understanding."

"Well, your loving him does n't necessarily endear him to me," snapped Richard.

"As long as Hillcrest is my house, Richard, I think I have a perfect right to choose my own buyer, and I choose Judge Carteret, right now."

"If that is your wish, I have no more to say. Judge Carteret can have the place; but I want it understood, it is against my wishes. Am I to let him have it at his own price?" he asked haughtily.

"Certainly not. It is a business matter, pure and simple."

"Possibly you had better make the terms yourself."

"Why, Richard!" indignantly.

He marched out of the room, and left her to

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puzzle over this new element,— Richard's jealousy. He had never taken the trouble to be jealous of her before, and it amused her, annoyed her, and pleased her a little, too.

CHAPTER IV

THE GIRL WHO LIVES IN THE WOODS

IT was one of those days, late in April, when pretty Miss Spring coquettes with departing Winter. She preens and plumes herself like a self-conscious beauty. She buttons on her new frock with pale green buds, and winds a circlet for her hair, of the first frightened wood flowers; she wraps herself in a veil of soft blue and white clouds, and flaunts a pennant of mild warm winds about her. Thus attired she wafts a kiss to disgruntled Winter, and bids him begone to his lair.

Sometimes he takes her at her word and disappears, but now and again he amuses himself and humors her, by giving her a chance to try all her wiles on him. 'T is then that she leads him a merry chase, over hill and dale, where his awkward feet, trained to snow and ice, stumble across the soft green carpet, laid for her. Miss

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Spring's laugh at her clumsy lover echoes across the world like a robin's call.

Just to punish her for that frivolity, he nips her buds, winds a cloak of white snow-flakes about her, and nags her with a north wind, until she cries him mercy and says, womanwise, "Oh, well, if it comes to a measure of mere brute strength I won't play!"

With a wild guffaw at her childishness and perhaps a chill kiss on her apple-blossom cheek, old Winter takes himself off to his frozen North, and leaves the smiling world to her!

On such a day of alternate sun and shadow, a girl, who was swinging along through the woods toward Hillcrest Lodge, stopped short and listened, her head held high like a hunter, sniffing a new scent. The sound of hammers and saws and workmen's voices cut the country stillness.

"Intruders," the girl said indignantly, walked up to the open lodge door, and looked in. The men at work stared at the apparition in frank astonishment.

She was slight, and rather small, but lithe as a willow bough. Her hair was blue-black,

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curled low off her brow, and was caught in a knot at the nape of her neck. Her eyes were blue or green or gray, according to her mood, and her skin had the warm cream white of a Japonica flower. She was strangely dressed in a very short dark wool skirt, a man's loose sweater which hung below her hips, heavy low shoes, and thick stockings. She wore no hat, although the wind was keen.

"Is some one going to move in here?" she asked.

"Sure," answered one of the men.

"Who are they, do you know?"

"Barrett's the name. They used to own the whole place; but young Barrett got funny on the Board of Trade and lost his pile, so he had to sell the big house to some old geezer named Carter, or Carton, or something like that. The Barretts are coming to live in the Lodge."

"Thank you," said the girl, and turned and marched up the driveway to the big house.

"I hate them," she muttered to herself; "I've owned this place myself so long, and now these Philistines will overrun it and just ruin it forever."

house was open, and she marched
There were workmen there too,
over each other in the rush. They
r, but no one questioned her right
to be there, her manner was so proprietary.
She wandered through the big rooms, looked out
of the windows at her favorite views, without
apology, or by-your-leave. She felt this place
to be hers by right of discovery and her love
for it.

The furniture was swathed and piled in the
centre of each room, and as one looked through
the lower floor, it was like an army of invasion,
in full possession of the points of vantage. The
girl stood in the frame of a long French win-
dow that looked over the bluff and the water,
and sent her thoughts back over the hours
she had spent dreaming that this place belonged
to her.

It had been like a game, or a story with no
ending, or a Chinese play, in which she had
indulged herself on long gray winter after-
noons, pacing the veranda, and dedicating the
house to new uses each day, with herself as chate-
laine. Sometimes, to amuse herself at night, she

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made sketches of these dreams and the people who inhabited them.

Once for a day or two, lashed by her own rebellious hatred of life as she found it, she threw herself into the conceit that the big house was a mediæval convent in France or Italy, and she herself the Mother Superior, dispensing the manna of the Church to tired, disillusioned, sinful women, who came to her for salvation. She played the role with a passionate ardor, and peopled the cloistered walks of the garden with these women so vividly, that she saw them and spoke with them by name, as if in reality. The spiritualization of those days actually quieted her feverish mind.

Again, Hillcrest House became to her a sort of Temple of Enlightenment, where she as High Priestess, preached a gospel of revolution and reconstruction to the People. She painted for them, in wondrous colors, the socialist vision of a land of milk and honey for all men. She led daily discussions and debates there, at the Temple doors, or marched her school about the garden, like a lineal descendant of the old peripatetic philosophers.

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When she tired of the People, she became an imprisoned Princess, immured in the Castle of Loneliness, awaiting the Prince's coming. At this point her dream veered somewhat from the conventional, for this up-to-date Princess put in the time of waiting by improving the condition of her serfs. She organized them, she educated them, she gave them libraries, free baths, and debating societies; she donated a *crèche* for busy mothers — in short she fitted them out with all the paraphernalia of modern emancipation, and became so interested as Dictator of the Commonwealth, that when the Prince finally arrived, she scorned his affection and sent him on his way, because, forsooth, he protested against these unmaidenly innovations.

As she stood in the window, saying good-bye to her possessions, she laughed aloud at the absurd ending of her fairy tale; then, at a sound of amusement behind her, she turned and faced the man who stood in the doorway. He swept off his hat.

"So you're one of the intruders?" she said calmly.

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"I? I was about to apply that term to you — mentally of course, only mentally."

"I'm just — a girl who lives in the woods. I've always felt, ever since I came out here, that this place belonged to me."

"I see. I am just an architect fellow, named Saxton Graves, and I'm doing the house over for Judge Carteret."

"Judge Carteret?"

"Yes; he's your intruder."

"I shall hate him. When is he coming out here?"

"Next month, if we can get ready for him. He's a prince of a fine fellow. When you know him, you'll not mind letting him have your place out here."

"I shall not like him," she flung over her shoulder, as she walked out of the room. "I always know when I am going to like people."

Mr. Graves followed in her wake.

"Do you tell people in advance, whether their chances for your favor register high or low?"

"Why?"

"I'd like to know what my rating is."

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"You? Oh, I had n't thought of you at all."

"I see. Some people do not register at all — simply fail to cast a shadow! Have you an antipathy to architects, as well as to judges and intruders?"

"I 've never known any."

"Good. Then you must have an open mind on the subject. I think the first of a new species is always sure to be interesting; don't you?"

"It depends entirely on the specimen you run across."

"I think you must be very exacting, Girl Who Lives in the Woods, but I assure you I am a very excellent specimen."

"Are all architects so modest?"

"Yes, that is one of our striking characteristics as a species."

"So. You might give me a list of the main traits and peculiarities, so that I may recognize your kind at sight."

"For purposes of scientific investigation?"

"No; protection."

He laughed aloud at this, and led the way to the heaped-up furniture in the middle of the hall.

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"Under such circumstances, what is my pleasure becomes also my duty. Every lady should be taught how to defend herself when pursued by a wild architect. Kindly be seated on this misshapen monster, which, in real life, is a Louis XV couch."

The girl looked at him, hesitating a second, and then sat down on the couch. Saxton Graves stood before her, looking whimsically at her serious face. He assumed an oratorical tone, as of one exhibiting a collection of rare specimens in a museum.

"The Architect, a specimen of which you see before you, is a two-legged, non-fur-bearing animal, of the Beaver family; he is, in fact, a natural-born builder. He is to be found in droves, herds, or flocks in our large cities, his favorite habitat, although in the early spring and late fall, preceding and following the summer season, he is found in large numbers in the country, building and rebuilding with brick and plaster, dwellings for the Man family."

"Does he build by instinct?"

"No; by necessity. He is, or may be, a con-

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triver and contractor by instinct; but a builder is not born, but made."

"Harmless?"

"Until aroused."

"And then?"

"Dangerous — very dangerous."

"How can you tell when he is aroused?"

"He makes a noise like conversation."

"Dear me! Is he easily excited?"

"Yes, by ladies."

"Any ladies?"

"All — I might say — all ladies."

"Stupid! I knew he would n't interest me."

"He is, I forgot to say, affectionate by nature."

"Worse yet. A dog is the only animal that can be affectionate gracefully."

"You would not care to trap and domesticate one, then?"

"Mercy, no! I hope they do not inhabit these parts."

"No doubt there are a few wild ones hereabouts. They like to root out new sites for building."

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"The Forest Preserve Society ought to exterminate them; they are ruinous to the woods."

"But no; they improve the country. A good-looking house, such as I build, will improve any woods."

She sniffed her scorn and changed the subject.

"What do you mean to do to this house? I know you 'll spoil it."

"You like it as it is, then?"

"I think it is almost perfect."

"Thank you!" elaborately.

She lifted her eyes in question.

"A poor thing, but my own!" he deprecated.

"You built this house of your own dream, your own thoughts, your own brain?"

"Yes, mixed with a little brick and mortar."

"I have more use for you than I thought I had."

He ignored this gracious concession, and led the way to parts of the house where changes were to be made, and explained his plans to her. Now she objected, now she praised, and Graves found her frank comments interesting. He had never met any one so surrounded by imper-

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sonality, and being a young man used to the most personal relations with his kind, especially womankind, he was piqued and curious. After the inspection she turned to go.

"Look in now and then and see how we progress, Miss —"

"I shall not be interested in my house, now that it is to belong to this disgusting judge person."

"Won't you allow the poor Judge any chance at all? Wait till you see him, before you condemn him, Miss — By the way, you haven't told me your name."

"No. What difference does it make?"

"Well, I expect to be out here a good deal this spring, and I believe you said you lived in the neighborhood, so I thought I might come into your woods and call on you some day. I would not know whom to ask for. Perhaps your people might —"

"I have n't any people. I live alone."

"Then I ask permission of you."

"I never have callers."

She started to go.

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"You refuse to continue the study of the species *architectus*, genus *homo*?"

"It does n't seem to interest me much."

She moved toward the steps.

"You might take a look at the genus."

"I have; bores me awfully," came the retort from halfway across the road. Then she glanced back and threw him a smile, teeth, eyes, and red lips all aflash, before she disappeared among the brown tree-trunks.

"You couch with the wild birds, in bracken and ling,
O'er your sleep, danger-haunted, the wistful larks sing,
And the gay blackbirds fling you their mirth, my green
Plover;

Lie close in your cover — the Hawk's on the wing!"

the architect animal sang gayly and defiantly.

CHAPTER V

THE HOUSE IN THE WOODS

“‘SILLY, conceited idiot! ‘Homo,’ indeed! They’re all alike and equally tiresome,” muttered The Girl Who Lived in the Woods, whose real name, by the way, was Cecilia Carné. She made her way along the path worn by her feet through the wood, and her quick eyes took in every twig and tree. Her glance swept the sky, reddening toward sunset with the crude strong colors that come in early spring. She marvelled at the blue-gray of the water, resigning itself, as it were, to the softening influence of spring winds. She delighted in the first faint green of the trees against the background of spruce and pine. When she came to the clearing in the wood, just this side of her cabin, she gave a rapturous “Oh!” at the glory of color that was splashed across the sky.

“I could get that if I worked fast,” she said,

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and flew into her cabin, where she was vociferously greeted by a superb setter dog.

"Not now, Omar; I'm busy," she said, and rushed out and squatted on the moist ground, painting away for dear life, unconscious of the damp wind that was coming off the lake, or of her cramped position. Omar sat sedately beside her. It was a race between her rapid brush and the setting sun. All at once the dark fell on the woods, like a lid shutting down, and with a sigh she picked up her things, stood up, and stretched herself.

"My-o, but I'm stiff and damp! I never noticed how wet the earth was. Smell it, though, coming off the woods, Omar, the earth is fairly oozling spring!"

Omar barked appreciatively and circled her in mighty leaps.

"Come on, let's go in and see what we've got on this paper."

She led the way to the door, and he followed.

"Did you have plenty of time for repentance and castigation while I was gone? Are you truly remorseful? Do you understand that I went for a walk alone? I met a queer creature

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in the neighborhood, too. You might have enjoyed him, Omar, you're so democratic in your tastes; I did n't."

On the door-step she faced about.

"Did I hear you say that you were sorry that you killed the chickens of our estimable neighbor, Mrs. Grantley?"

He hung his head, tail between his legs. The mere mention of chickens was a humiliation.

"I should hope so. Every young dog must have his fling, but really, Omar, from all I gathered from Mrs. Grantley's irate coachman, you acted like a common yellow marauder!"

He whined pitifully.

"Nuff said, old fellow. We must keep our sporting blood down. We must remember our position in this neighborhood, and be discreet."

She patted him, pushed the door open and went in. The cabin itself was rudely built of logs, and unplastered. Almost one whole side of it was fireplace, built of cobblestones held together with rough plaster, crude in construction, but very effective. In front of the fireplace there was a big settle sort of thing, very deep seated. It was cushioned with tan burlap, and with the

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addition of a couple of pillows and an Indian blanket it served Miladi as a bed. There were a few chairs, all strange in design, and a craftsman's table of Cecilia's own make. A big box, stained brown, served as a china closet, and above it were a home-made shelf and some books. Everywhere there were candlesticks, tin and copper and wooden, attached to the walls and set about the room. There was even a tiny candle-shelf at the back of the settle, so that a light might fall across a book.

The most striking thing about the room was a strip of coarse canvas, some two feet wide, that stretched all around the walls, like a frieze, and there were trees painted on it, running through the four seasons. One wall had a row of white poplar saplings, tipped with the faintest pale green against an azure sky; the next wall showed a clump of willows in rustling mid-summer luxuriance; next came a burst of red and yellow maples, with a brown oak here and there; and then, outlined against a cold white winter sky, were some bare black trunks, their crooked fingers pointing toward the spring promise on the adjacent wall. The whole thing

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was done brilliantly, boldly, dramatically. It made the room a part of all outdoors.

Cecilia lit the fire already laid on the hearth, and knelt beside it to look at her sketch, the dog beside her.

"Not so bad, eh, Omar? It'll work up, don't you think? It has the thing suggested—the crashing color, the eternal crimson warfare between Night and Day. I love the way Night takes possession of the earth."

Omar put his head on her shoulder and yawned. It was time to eat, and here she was rhapsodizing. She dragged him into her arms.

"We have a pretty good time of it, don't we, Omar? Goodness knows, we're poor enough, but it's a primitive sort of poverty, that makes you think of Pilgrim Fathers; it is n't the grimy sordid squalor of the city. They thought in the village that we'd starve or freeze to death, did n't they? Or some tramp would murder us for our money."

She shook him by the ears, and he whimpered with delight.

"Just behold our luxuries! We cut our own firewood, with an axe; we gather twigs for our

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kindlings; we live on peanuts and bananas, and now and then we cook coffee and potatoes on our open fire. Also we paint all night and all day, when we please and where we please. We have the boon of quiet and solitude, no stupid bores to put up with, no degenerate geniuses, no posing ninnies — just you, Omar Khayyám, poet, philosopher, and dreamer, and me, Cecilia Carné, possessed with a zest for a life of my own making.”

Omar licked his chops noisily to indicate his own line of thought.

“There is one thing sure though, my friend, and that is that unless that penurious old dealer buys our latest masterpiece, we shall have to cut down on rations. However, as you remarked in your immortal book, my dear Omar,

‘Drink, for ye know not whence ye came, nor why.’

“To-night I have a surprise for you — a bone, a perfectly good bone, with meat on it.”

Now she was getting his idea, and he cheered her to the echo, leaping about her, as she went to extract the treasure from its hiding-hole.

“You ’re materialistic creatures, you men.”

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She was off the track again; he sat up and begged.

"I will admit to you," she laughed, as she tossed it to him, "that the Grantley dog was enjoying it as I came along. I sent him after a stick and snatched his food, which was not honorable in the strictest sense of the word; but he is really getting too fat for health or beauty, so my intention was altruistic."

Omar was too engrossed for any qualms, so Cecilia went to the cupboard and inspected its contents.

"The poor dog in this case is like to have the only bone there is. Omar, I've been saving the makings of one cup of coffee for a celebration, but I'm so beastly hungry to-night I think I'll have it. We'll celebrate our extreme poverty. There is something superb about drinking your last cup of coffee when you've no idea where you'll ever get another."

Omar growled agreement, not to lose any time, and Cecilia brewed the coffee and hung the pot on the hook over the fire, placed her cup and saucer and banana beside her on the settle, and sat down to watch the coffee boil. Suddenly

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she picked up the banana and smilingly addressed it.

“Oh, thou faithful banana, why has no poet sung thy frugal charms? So cheap and so nutritious and so nasty! It’s no use going back on an old friend, but when I look forward to one banana a day for all the years to come, I shudder!”

A loud knock at the door brought Cecilia to her feet. Omar growled furiously, for visitors were unknown.

“A guest, Omar, a guest,” Cecilia protested, and opened the door.

A middle-aged woman stood on the step, a servant behind her with a huge bundle in her arms. Cecilia stared at the apparition and recognized the woman as their affluent neighbor Mrs. Grantley, even before that lady swept by her into the house. Omar, with Grantley chickens on his soul, made no protest, but crawled under the settle.

“You are Miss Carné,” her guest began. “I am Mrs. Hugh Grantley, your neighbor. I had no idea you were living out here, Miss Carné, until I heard about you to-day, from my friend

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Mrs. Presby, who has a house in the village and stays out here all winter. I go to California or Florida in the winter, of course; but, as I started to say, Mrs. Presby said you did some dinner cards for her once that were so clever, and she said she heard you were out here, and that she suspected you were in real want —”

“That is a mistake, Mrs. Grantley,” Cecilia interrupted haughtily; but Mrs. Grantley was not to be halted.

“I came right over the minute I came home from the village. To think of any one so near me being in want—it makes me creepy. I brought you some good warm clothes, and I want you to come right back with me to dinner. Mr. Grantley is not coming out, so there will be just ourselves, and you won’t be uncomfortable.”

Cecilia flushed to the roots of her hair.

“I am not a pauper, Mrs. Grantley, in need of alms. I have no use for the clothes, and I have accepted another invitation to dinner.”

“Oh, come now, that is false pride, my dear. I admire pride, in its place; but when it becomes arrogance, then it’s a sin. Now, I’ve handled plenty of cases, just like yours, nice hard-work-

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ing girls, who needed the help of some tactful woman. It is, I grant, courageous of you to be living out here by yourself, but it is n't decent and it is n't safe. No young girl can afford to do anything that is liable to be misunderstood. It looks as if there were something you wanted to hide, away off here in the woods by yourself."

"There is something I want to hide," Cecilia remarked.

For a minute Mrs. Grantley looked anxious. She was willing to help out under certain conditions. There were limits, however; one could n't be expected to help escaped criminals and such people.

"What do you want to hide?" she asked sharply.

"Myself."

"You are n't wanted for anything? You are n't a — a — fugitive from justice?"

Cecilia's eyes laughed although she answered seriously.

"Oh, no, I'm not a criminal, Mrs. Grantley. I have come out here away from people because they irritate me, and I prefer my own society."

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"You are n't poor at all, then? It's just a fad, this cottage business?"

"Certainly I'm poor, but I'm not asking help from the parish yet."

"The idea!" sputtered Mrs. Grantley. "I rushed myself to get these clothes together and get over here. Some of the clothes are nearly new, and two pairs of brand-new silk stockings."

"I am sure you meant well, but I cannot accept charity."

Mrs. Grantley, in superb indignation, swept toward the door, where her servant stood guard. It happened that in passing her eye fell on the frieze.

"Where did you get that?" she demanded.

"The frieze? I made it."

"Painted it yourself?"

She marched about, inspecting the walls closely.

"I'll buy it of you. I'll give you two hundred dollars for it," she said magnificently.

"Thank you, it is not for sale."

"Do you mean to say you will not sell your paintings?"

"Oh, yes, I sell some of them. Sims, Hart-

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ford & Co. are my dealers. This I happen to like myself, so I keep it."

"Well, of all the —" Mrs. Grantley began, and again made for the door. "Come, Fellows. I'll inform Mrs. Presby that she made a mistake. I bid you good-night, Miss Carné."

"I bid you the same, Mrs. Grantley."

Cecilia closed the door upon the aristocratic back, and hurled herself on the settle in a shriek of laughter that fairly shook the cabin.

"‘I have accepted another invitation to dinner,’" she mimicked herself. "‘That was with you, Omar. Ye gods, what a beneficence! We have been visited by the Lend-a-hand, Omar, bearing silk stockings. O gods of the Ridiculous, for this slight diversion in our monotony we thank you, and we make a libation!’"

She poured out the one precious cup of coffee and drank it with mock solemnity.

CHAPTER VI

THE LODGE

THE rain poured down in dull, steady monotony, and the thirsty earth gulped it. There are days of rain in the country, warm and gentle, that gladden your soul, and then there are days bleak with wind and cold rain, that seem to obliterate all hope. This was such a one. A country hack jogged along, splashing through the puddles in the road, and came to a halt before the Lodge at Hillcrest.

“Here ye are,” cried the Jehu, opening the rickety old door.

Mrs. Barrett, Mrs. O’Brien, and a Swedish girl from the village got out, and Mrs. Barrett and the girl ran for the shelter of the porch, while Mrs. O’Brien stayed to rescue the hand luggage and settle with the cabby. The settling was attended by a lively discussion.

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"Ixtry fer bringin' us in the rain, is ut? I guess not. We ain't responsible fer the rain; we did n't hoire ut to rain loike this! Phwat's more, we ain't payin' you because it's rainin' ayther, fer ye ain't a-runnin' the iliments yerself."

"Pay him what he asks, Bridget, and come on. You have the key, and we're nearly frozen," called Mrs. Barrett.

"Wan minute, ma'am. Now, ye thievin' son av a Black Oirishman, here's wan dollar fer the thrip, an' 't is ivry penny ye'll be gettin' from me; so aff wid ye."

"Fifty cints more, or I'll have the law on ye!" cried the irate cabby.

"Come on aff that box, and talk it out face to face!" ordered Mrs. O'Brien. The man sized her up, and drove off, cursing her in round Irish oaths.

"What were you fighting about?" said Mrs. Barrett impatiently as Bridget struggled with the door, which stuck.

"From now on, I'm goin' to see that nobody round here gits the bist of the Barrutt family, specially not a black Oirishman! We are goin' to be savin'—also ayconomical. Ouch!"

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The door gave way suddenly and Mrs. O'Brien was precipitated in headlong. The other two followed her forlornly. The interior smelled of damp new plaster, and of old stale tobacco smoke from the workmen decamped only the day before. It was cold, with that bitter spring cold so much more poignant than winter chill. The furniture was shrouded and bur-lapped, huddled in the middle of the floor, surrounded by packing-boxes of all sizes.

"My, what a nasty smell!" sniffed Mrs. Barrett.

"'T is thim durty painters. I dunno why ut is that painters do be such loud, ill-smellin', poipe-shmokin' craytures."

She took off her things while she talked.

"Ye see, ye ought to have took my advice an' stayed comfort'ble in town an' lift this settlin' business to me. 'T is no choild's play, I can till ye."

"I can see that," admitted Mrs. Barrett weakly.

"Where is that son av Balaam that was to have stharterd me foire this marnin'? I'll fix him whin I git me hands on him."

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She dashed out into the basement, where they heard her crashing about. Mrs. Barrett sat down on a box and looked about her in despair. She had always thought of the Lodge in mid-summer, flower-encircled and tucked away in the edge of the woods. She was so unused to doing disagreeable things herself; why, all her life she had been the final touch to her perfect surroundings, introduced only when everything was complete. She felt resentful toward Richard that he had allowed her to come to this desolate place. She was angry with her mother for not preparing her for the shock of this stern actuality. It never occurred to her, that they had as little idea of what settling a house meant, as she had.

The shivering, blue-nosed Swedish Hulda stood miserably in the corner, clasping her concave stomach with her folded hands, and eyeing her new mistress steadily with her unblinking, watery, blue eyes. All at once Anne Barrett burst into tears. Hulda fled in alarm to call help, and plunged into Mrs. O'Brien at the door, whose arms were full of wood. That general took in the situation at a glance, dumped the

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wood into the arms of the petrified Hulda, took her sobbing mistress in her arms and talked to her as she might have talked to Bobby.

"There, there, darlin', now, don't ye get down-hearted all at wanst. We'll git things a-goin' in half a minute, an' nuthin' cheers ye up loike a good foire."

"It looks so ugly and hopeless!" sobbed Mrs. Barrett.

"Hopeless? Don't ye think ut. Ye ain't used to unpackin' an' settlin'; but take me word for ut, there's no more fun in the world fer a woman than fixin' up her own little house. Wait till the sun comes out, an' see what ye'll see."

She patted and petted poor Anne into silence, then she laid a fire in the fireplace, and had it roaring in a jiffy. She cut the burlap off a big chair, rolled it close, and had her mistress in it all at once.

"You're very good to me, Bridget; I know I'm a goose."

Bridget gave her a pat and turned to the Swede, still open-mouthed in the corner.

"Shut your mouth, Hulda, an' go into the kitchen an' bile some wather for a cup av tay."

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"Oh, don't bother!" Anne protested, but Mrs. O'Brien waved Hulda out.

"I got that newfangled heatin' thing in the basemint goin', but 't will take me some toime to git on free an' aisy spakin' terms wid ut. I ain't so much av an ingineer as some, but what I set out to do gits done."

"Bidgie, you old dear, I should have committed suicide if you had n't been with me."

"Not ye; I know ye better. Ixcuse me, whoile I see phwat that Swade's doin'. They tould me she was green, but I to't she could bile wather."

She disappeared, and loud exhortation floated in from the kitchen. Anne sat still only too content to let her run things. Presently she appeared, with a tin cup of hot tea in her hand, and a broad grin on her face.

"Sure, that pink-eyed rabbit was bilin' wather fer tay in the wash-biler, because 't was the only thing she could foind. Drink ut, darlin', 't is hot. I think I've fished all the ixcelior out av ut."

Anne laughed and drank it gratefully. Presently the men came who were to help unpack, and a colored boy to scrub. The house had been

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already cleaned, so Mrs. O'Brien ordered the men to unpack the kitchen things first so that she and Hulda could get that department settled, while Mrs. Barrett superintended the other work. Anne was warmed through by that time and had begun to take some interest in the affair.

As soon as the men got to work, Mrs. O'Brien and Hulda ripped off the burlap and dusted the upholstered furniture in the living-room. Anne wandered about with nothing to do, since Mrs. O'Brien stood at the helm so valiantly. She felt a sense of shame at her own impotence, and resolved then and there that her practical education was to begin.

She descended upon Mrs. O'Brien and demanded work. That shrewd woman gave her orders at once, and set her to unpacking books and arranging book-cases. They all worked like beavers, and noon was upon them before they caught their breaths. Mrs. O'Brien and Hulda got together a very creditable lunch, and Anne had her first democratic experience, when she sat on a packing-box in the kitchen, and ate her lunch with four burly packers, one Swedish Hulda, and one Bridget O'Brien, mistress of ceremonies.

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After lunch they plunged in again, and the chaos of the first floor really seemed to take shape. By five o'clock, when the men left, Anne was so utterly tired out that she could hardly stand.

"There 's no use talkin', ye 're too toired to go back to town this noight. We 'll tilephone Mr. Barrutt that we 'll spind the noight out here, so we can get an airly start in the marnin'."

"But there are no beds — how could we?"

"The couch will do ye, with the stheamer blanket I brought out. Hulda can go back to the village fer the noight, an' I 'll curl me up somewhere."

"I 'd be afraid; would n't you?"

"Afraid? I 've yit to see the thing I 'm scairt av. We 'll sind the naygur to the village fer somethin' to ate fer us."

"I 'm too tired to decide."

"Then we 'll stay. I 'll get the house on the woire. D'ye want to spake wid Mr. Barrutt yerself, mum?"

"No."

"All roight. I 'll give thim me orthers fer Bobby."

She went out, and Anne dropped into the big

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chair, content to be managed. Bridget called in that it was all arranged, and Mrs. Barrett was not to move till supper was ready. Anne promised, and dozed off, worn out with the day.

When she opened her eyes later, the long red rays of the sun fell across the room, in a royal burst of color. The rain had stopped. She went to the window and opened it. The heavy smell of wet earth came up to her. Like a man satiate with drink, the world was sinking into slumber. Anne stretched her aching arms above her head and breathed the pungent air deep into her lungs.

"It's a good omen," she cried, and kissed her hand to Old Sol. "I'm so tired I could die, and so hungry I could scream, and between this smell of spring woods, and frying bacon, I am thoroughly intoxicated."

"Supper is served on the kitchen table!" announced Mrs. O'Brien, and Anne answered the call joyfully.

Anne often looked back to that first night at the Lodge, and the beginning of her friendship for the faithful Bridget O'Brien, who had been

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an inmate of her house for years and still a stranger. After supper, they sat before the fire and talked for hours. Anne found the older woman a deep well of experience. She had a shrewd understanding of life, and a quaint philosophy of her own, flicked over with an irresistible Celtic sense of humor.

“’T is manny’s the toime in the ould count-hree, we childer brought our blankets to the foire, an’ slipt on the hearth. I remimber wanst, that wan av me brithers got could in the noight an’ rolled into the hot ashes in his slape. Me mother grabbed him, an’ shook him; we thought ’t was bewitched he was, an’ him yellin’ so we could n’t foind out where he was hurted.”

She laughed and shook her head over the memory.

“Those were great days, mum. ’Tin childer, me mother, an’ me fayther, an’ two pigs — we all lived in the cabin, no bigger than half this room.”

“Mercy! how awful!”

“Well, I dunno. We were as healthy as the nixt; we’re all livin’ yet — barrin’ the pigs.

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Whiniver Bobby gits rambunkshus about the things he wants, I till him about phwat me an' me brithers an' sisters had."

"You like it better over here, don't you?"

"'T is a wonderful counthree, mum, is Ameriky; but me heart goes back to ould Oirland, just the same. Me mother an' me fayther are dead, long ago, an' the rist av us is all on this soide the wather; but 't is me fer the ould sod, an' home to die."

"That 's a long time off."

"I'll be sthayin' till Master Bobby grows up. He's the heart av me heart, is Bobby."

Anne leaned over and put her hand on the old woman's arm.

"Bridget O'Brien, will you share him a little with me? I have n't been a good mother to him; I've always neglected him. And now, when I want him, he's gotten used to not having me. Mrs. O'Brien, tell me how to make Bobby love me."

"Nobody iver had to tell a mother that, darlin'. If ye give him yer love, an' yer interest, why, he'll open his tinder little heart to ye, an' take

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ye in, wid niver a thought for yer neglectin' av him."

"Will he? Do you really believe he will?"

"Av coorse I do. I've been watchin' av ye, iver since I've been takin' the place the Lord meant ye to have, an' I've said to mesilf, 'Some day she'll want her roightful place, Bridget O'Brien; ye must be ready to give ut to her, an' make him ready for her comin'.'"

The tears fell on the hand that was stretched out to Mrs. O'Brien, and the old woman grasped it warmly between her hard palms.

"We'll work it out together, Bridget, this new life and these new relationships. I want you to know how I appreciate your stewardship, and how glad I am to have your friendship and affection."

"'T is happy we're goin' to be here, the four av us!" prophesied Bridget O'Brien with conviction.

CHAPTER VII

THE INSTALLATION

TWO weeks after Anne's first trying day at the Lodge the Barrett family was installed in the new home. They drove up in style, in the hack this time, and were deposited without any altercation.

It was a lovely, blue-skied day in May, warm and odorous. It was Richard's first glimpse of the Lodge this season, for Anne had insisted upon his not coming out until everything was complete. It certainly was attractive, with bowls of early May flowers at the windows, in proper cottage style, and a starched and shining Mrs. O'Brien framed in the door.

With a whoop Bobby precipitated himself on her breast, and they became oblivious to everything but one another. Anne led Richard into the sweet, fragrant living-room, where she had offered the labor of her hands, and the loving

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hopes of her heart as the building stuff of their first real home.

"By Jove, Nan, is n't this sweet?" exclaimed Richard; and she blushed like a bride, as he tucked her hand under his arm and marched her from attic to cellar. He was boyishly enthusiastic over it all; he even waxed complimentary to Mrs. O'Brien over her model kitchen, where Hulda, in chronic pink-eyed astonishment, sat at her work. Back in the living-room he threw his arm around Anne, and rested his cheek against hers.

"I believe we 're going to be mighty happy out here, Nan. Maybe we 'll find a whole lot of things we missed in town. Do you remember what you said once about our missing all the essential things because we had so many non-important ones?"

"No! did I say that?"

"You said the essentials were 'love, toleration, generosity, and forbearance.' I'd like to paint them over the door, and never come in here without all of them in my heart."

"Oh, Richard, I believe that poverty was the greatest gift the gods could bestow on us."

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"We 'll make it that, Nan. I 've made up my mind that I 'm going to do my part to make it worth your sticking to me as you have. Don't think I have n't appreciated it because I don't say much. From now on, it's more doing and less saying for me."

At this point, Bobby tripped over the threshold on his face, and threw a big hop-toad at his mother's feet.

"Bobby," she cried, "are you hurt?"

"No, no," he said, scrambling up. "Tatch my hopper; tatch him."

Richard made for the toad, laughing, and the toad made for shelter. Bobby jumped up and down and shrieked with joy, as his father pursued in vain.

"Head him off over there, Nan!" called Richard, and Anne rushed to bar the way into the dining-room, while her husband and son beat under the furniture, trying to flush the game.

"I don't like him jumping toward me," Anne protested.

"Coward! Bobby carried him in in his hands," Richard taunted.

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"I tatched him under the porch — I tatched him!"

A lunge from Richard, a hop from the toad, and a shriek from Anne brought Mrs. O'Brien to the door. They all explained at once, and she went for a broom, laughing to herself.

"The three kiddies — bliss their hearts," she muttered. When she came back with the broom they all joined the hunt.

"You 'd think even a toad would know a door when he saw it. He 's hopped right by it twice," Anne laughed.

"I 've nearly swipt the spots off his skin wid me broom."

"I 'll tatch him!" squealed Bobby for the sixtieth time.

Just then a big red setter bounded into the room, grasped the situation at once, apparently, and joined in the chase. At a step on the porch they all turned. Cecilia Carné stood in the door.

"Did my dog come in here? Why, what 's the matter?"

"My little son brought a toad in here, and we 're trying to get it out on the porch."

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The girl laughed and eyed them all frankly.

"Omar, take him, take the toad," she ordered.

Omar did as he was told in short order, and dashed off with the poor thing dangling from his mouth.

"Put my hopper down! Tell him to put him down!" Bobby ordered Cecilia.

"Drop him, Omar," she called, and the toad limped away, Bobby in full pursuit again.

"Are you the Barretts?" asked Cecilia bluntly.

"Yes. Will you come in? Are you a neighbor?"

"I live in the woods. My name is Cecilia Carné."

"Of course! how stupid of me! If I had n't been so excited over that horrid toad, I'd have known you at once."

"How?"

"Saxton Graves, the architect over at the big house, and a great friend of ours, told us about you."

"Oh!"

"Were you out here last summer? We were at Hillcrest several months, and I'm sure I should have remembered you."

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"I came late in September."

"You must have found it lonely, wintering out here."

"I am never lonely."

"I hope we shall be good friends. There are so few people about that we ought to be neighborly."

"When is Judge Carteret coming out?" said Cecilia, ignoring Mrs. Barrett's friendly lead.

"Next week, I hope. You know the Judge?"

"Only by name."

"You 'll like him, I 'm sure. Everybody does, he is so genial and charming and kind."

"I never like any one that every one recommends. Besides, I don't approve of Judge Carteret or his views. I 'm a socialist."

"Indeed?" said Anne in a horrified way. Was this a bomb-throwing young person, such as one read of in the newspapers? That was the only thing socialism meant to Anne.

"Good dog you have there," Richard commented, as Omar bounded up.

"Yes. He 's the most sensible person I know. Where are you going to put your kitchen garden?"

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"Kitchen garden? Why — I — we — where are we going to have it, Richard?"

"I don't know anything about gardens. Why?" he asked.

"Because I've picked out the place for it. Come out, and I'll show you."

Perforce they followed their strange guest out to the back of the house. Quite a bit east of the Lodge there was a cleared space, where the sun had a good chance at the earth.

"You see this little roll in the ground will help to water it, because the rain will drain down, and the sun gets at it. It is far enough away from the house, so you can fence it in."

"What would you advise us to raise?" asked Anne.

"Peas, squash, tomatoes, onions, lettuce. You can raise all you'll need for the table."

"How splendid that would be, Richard, and what a saving!"

"Humph! Not if you don't know anything about it."

"Ever tried gardening?"

"No; we had two gardeners at the big house.

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"We are not planning to have any at this little place," Richard answered.

"I should hope not. You ought to get things out at once. It's lucky for you that the season is backward."

"Bobby has a book on gardening that his grandmother gave him. We'll read it," said Anne.

"You need n't, it won't do you a bit of good. You just have to learn by trying. It's the most fascinating thing in the world, to make a garden. I'll drop in now and then and give you some help."

"That's very kind," said Richard.

"No; it's self-indulgence. It's like building an open fire — nobody can do it as well as you can yourself. Same way with a garden. Do you know how to build a fence?" she asked Anne.

"Me? A fence? Why, no!"

"I'll come over and show you. You just need a little one to keep the dogs out. We can build it while your husband is in town some day."

"All right. We can get the carpenter to help us."

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“Carpenter? What for?”

Anne subsided in disgrace, and they walked back to the house. At the door they invited Cecilia again to come in, but she refused. As they stood on the porch, the girl's eye fell on something in the room that attracted her eye. Without a word of apology, she walked past Anne, into the room, and up to a picture on the far wall — a study of a forest fire.

“Where did you get that?” she asked.

“I picked it up at a little shop in town. I just love it,” Anne answered. “You see, I have it hung opposite the fireplace, and you've no idea what a striking effect there is, when the fire-light falls on it.”

“Too striking, I tell her,” Richard interposed. “It makes me choke with wood smoke to look at it.”

“It is a tragic, thrilling picture to me,” Anne said; “like the immolation of a splendid band of martyrs.”

“It is good,” was Cecilia's only comment. She went to the door and turned, Omar beside her.

The Installation

"Perhaps we shall like each other," she said, nodded a good-bye, and tramped off without another word.

"What a strange creature!" said Anne. "Beautiful, too, in a way."

"Can't see it. Sort of dippy, I thought. You can see she knows all about gardening, though; so we'll cultivate her till I get things started, and you get the fence built," he laughed.

"Was n't it queer the way she marched over to look at this picture?"

Anne went over and stood before the painted forest speculatively. She stood on tiptoe and scanned it closely, just as a streak of sunlight fell across the corner of the canvas. She gave a startled exclamation and turned to her husband.

"Richard," she said excitedly, "she did it!"

"Who did what?"

"That girl — Cecilia Carné — that's the signature, as plain as day. I never could make it out before. Why, she's a genius!"

She sat down in a heap opposite Richard.

"Maybe. She's also a socialist, a gardener, and a dog-fancier. Queer combination!"

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"Nothing so interesting has happened to us for a long time. Think of finding a real genius out here in the woods!"

"Dinner!" said Mrs. O'Brien.

"*'A nos moutons,'*" remarked Richard, and ceremoniously offered his arm to lead her to their first meal in the Lodge. It was the first time in his life that Bobby had ever sat up to dine with his parents, and it was a great occasion to him.

"Mrs. Mudder, I asked my hopper to wait for me till I got my dinner," he confided to Anne.

"I don't believe he heard you, unless you pinned him down," Richard answered.

"Tan you pin a hopper? How tan you?"

"Father means put him in a box," Anne suggested.

"I 'd like to det a box and teep him," he said, sliding off his chair.

"No, get back on your chair. The woods are full of hoppers; you can get another one to-morrow."

"Full of 'em? Oh, I 'm dlad we're in the country; are n't you dlad?"

The Installation

"Yes, I am. We'll have a fine time in this little house, won't we?" Anne smiled at him.

"Yes, us will. Tan I tome to dinner evwy night, Mr. Father?"

"That's the idea, is n't it, Mrs. Mother?"

"Yes, early dinner, so we can have it together. Your daddy is coming out early every night just for that," she explained to Bobby. He absorbed it all earnestly.

"Tan I tall you — daddy?" he asked.

"Sure you can, and I'll call you — son."

Bobby gave a deep sigh of satisfaction.

"I love dis house and dis mudder and dis daddy," he said, pouring out his little heart.

Richard and Anne could not answer him; they only smiled through tears.

CHAPTER VIII

THE JUDGE ENTERTAINS

“**T** IRED, Bobolink?” Anne inquired of her small son as he trudged along beside her through the woods.

“Nope. Mudder, have I dot to do to bed when I det home?”

“We ’ll see, dear. I thought because you had no nap to-day that you ought to start to bye-lo early. Look, before very long the sun is going to bed.”

“Where does the sun do to bed?”

“Oh, down behind the world.”

“Has the sun dot a mudder to tuck him in?”

“I ’m afraid not, but I expect some motherly old cloud looks after him.”

“Like Bidgie does me? Give him a baf and his supper?”

“Um-hum.”

“When will we det to the Judge’s house?”

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"Pretty soon. Are your legs tired?"

"Kind of."

"Well, suppose we try pickaback."

She sat down on a stump, and Bobby handed over his collection of scraggly twigs and short-stemmed flowers, and put them carefully in the basket she carried. Bobby got on her shoulders, and they went on slowly, until presently they came upon Cecilia squatted in her favorite position, painting.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Carné."

Cecilia looked up, nodded, and went on painting.

"May I look over your shoulder?" asked Anne, and exclaimed with pleasure. Cecilia just worked on.

"I have wanted to see you so much, to tell you how happy I am to find that you did my forest picture. I never could make out the signature until that day you came in, and after you left us, it flashed across me like a message."

"I'm glad you have it," said Cecilia.

"Let me down, mudder."

"No, we'll go on, dearie. We're going to try to decorate the house a little for the Judge.

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He's coming out to-night to take his first dinner at Hillcrest. Bobby and I have ravaged the woods, but it's a bit early yet for out-of-door things. I had some flowers sent from town, so we shall rely on them for the most part."

Cecilia put in the last stroke and began to pack up her traps.

"If you are through, come along and help us. It is a good chance to look over the house. We think Mr. Graves has done splendidly with it."

Cecilia considered a moment and then rose.

"All right! I'll come," she said.

"I don't want her to do to de Judge's house," complained Bobby.

"Why, Bobolink, that is n't polite," his mother reproved him. "Why don't you want her to come and fix flowers for the Judge's house?"

"She don't like Bobby."

Cecilia looked at him gravely.

"He's right. I don't understand children, and they embarrass me."

"Maybe you have n't known any intimately. I never did until we came out here to live. Bobby and I are just getting acquainted, are n't we, Boy?"

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"We play, don't we mudder?"

"We do," she laughed.

They started along, Cecilia shouldering her traps, and Bobby perched on his mother's back. Anne and Bobby chattered away, but Cecilia was silent. Anne almost regretted asking her to come.

On reaching the big house they began their work of decoration at once. They collected all sorts and sizes of vases on the library table as a beginning. A keen observer might almost have read the temperaments of the two women in the vases they arranged. Anne chose the tall slender vases and the more delicate flowers, two or three pale roses in a bed of asparagus fern, or wood flowers in a tiny bowl. It was the delicate side of Nature that she loved, and her exquisite, delicately nurtured femininity hung like a veil against which the striking personality of the other girl stood forth.

Cecilia in her coarse man's sweater, her rough black hair rebellious about her face, her red lips, and her frank boy's eyes, seemed another sort of creature. She chose all the vases of unusual shape — squat low pottery bowls, copper and

brass jugs from India — and she filled them with flowers in barbaric combinations of color. Together on the table, they almost made Anne shudder, and Bobby said, “Dose are ugly!”

But with the unerring instinct of an artist, she placed each bowl and vase where it became the one needed spot of color.

“Let me do all the things for this room, and you do the ones for the dining-room, will you?” she asked Anne. “I like this room — it belongs to me — it’s home.”

Anne wondered at her, but she and Bobby obligingly carried their things to the next room, and left Cecilia in possession. The minute they left her, she drew back her head, like a pony released from the bridle, and began to study the room and its possibilities.

On one wall a sort of shrine had been built, and a squat bronze Buddha sat cross-legged and smiled his enigmatic smile down upon her. She turned and caught it squarely, and as if in reply, she seized a slender teakwood vase of Japanese forebears, placed in it one frail “Dutchman’s Pipe” from the woods, and set it before the god, salaaming low.

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“Accept this offering, O thou of the Eternal Smile! It is a slim white girl slave, destined for thy pleasure!”

When she surveyed her work after the room was finished, one burnished copper bowl remained unfilled. Out of the door she ran, and through the woods to her own house, whence she bore an armful of bronze-brown oak leaves, treasured since autumn. She filled the bowl and chose a place for it, high up on one of the book-cases, with a burnished shield for its background.

She had crawled up on the library ladder to try the effect of her arrangement, when there came the puff of an automobile on the drive, voices in the entrance hall, and they were in upon her, before she could escape,—Richard Barrett, Saxton Graves, and a tall distinguished man, whom she knew to be Judge Carteret. She did not stir, but sat aloft on the ladder and surveyed them all in unembarrassed silence. Saxton Graves saw her first.

“Upon my word!” he cried. “The presiding genius of the place superintending!”

They all looked at her in astonishment.

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"I came to help Mrs. Barrett arrange the flowers," she said simply.

"Judge Carteret, may I present you to The Girl Who Lives in the Woods? Girl — Judge Carteret."

Judge Carteret smiled his rare sweet smile, and advanced to the foot of the ladder.

"I am glad to find you here; it is a good omen."

She looked directly back at him and smiled.

"I thank you, Judge Carteret."

Mrs. Barrett and Bobby came down from upstairs, and there were greetings, congratulations, and much fun. The Judge looked about appreciatively.

"It is lovely, friends, and I can never tell you how much I appreciate this thought of me. Why, it is a real home-coming to a lonely man."

"Who did that?" demanded Saxton Graves, pointing to the offering before Buddha. "You did it, did n't you?" he said to Cecilia. "It's a touch of genius. And it looks like you."

"Come," said the Judge, to cover Cecilia's obvious embarrassment, "let us go over the house

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together, so we may uphold each other in our criticisms of Graves's work. Then you must all stay and have dinner with me. We will have an informal house-warming. I should have invited you all long ago, but I am so unsure of my time these days."

"We have to go home with Bobby, thank you," said Richard formally.

"Nonsense, run over to the Lodge with him, and come back. We'll make dinner suit your convenience. Mrs. Barrett, present me properly to my other guest. This Graves boy performed some fantastic ceremony which he called an introduction."

"Miss Carné, this is the Judge. Miss Cecilia Carné — Judge Carteret."

"Miss Carné, will you descend to our humble plane and look over my house?"

He held his hand to help her, and she touched it lightly, as she sprang down. They began the tour, all but Richard, and he moodily insisted upon going home with Bobby. He was unable to overcome his dislike of the Judge. Having made up his mind not to like him, even though

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he knew his first suspicions of him were unfair, he could not bring himself to acknowledge a mistake.

Anne and the Judge led the way into the dining-room, and then on through the house, Cecilia and Saxton Graves following.

"This is the greatest luck ever," he said to her.

"What is?"

"Finding you here to-night. You never came back to see how we were getting on, did you?"

"Yes; frequently."

"When?"

"Days you were not here."

Saxton groaned.

"You did n't like me glad young smile and the light of me laughing eye?"

She paid absolutely no attention to this sally, but crossed to look at the view from the Judge's study window.

"What do you think of it, Miss Carné?" the Judge asked, joining her.

"I think it is wonderful. I don't believe anyone could do mean, petty things, who lived with that clean open sweep of sky and water."

"And the Lord was upon the land and upon

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the face of the waters," said the Judge softly in his resonant voice. "I like that thought, Miss Carné, and each morning I shall look out and cleanse myself, and each night I shall purge me of the day's sins."

"Are you two discussing the case of the People *versus* Conrad and the Unions? You look solemn enough," Saxton called to them.

"Heaven forbid that we should bring that subject into this haven of rest. Let us be Unionless here," Judge Carteret answered, following the others. Cecilia startled him with her quick rejoinder.

"Think how Conrad and his Union would enjoy your haven of rest."

"No, my dear Miss Carné, they would not. They would ignore its outlook, deface its beauty, distrust its owner, and lament its isolation from the city. That is the pity of it."

Cecilia made no reply, and they entered the library, where Anne and Saxton had preceded them.

"We are all excused from dressing to-night, Mrs. Barrett, and I will order dinner in half an hour," the Judge said, excusing himself.

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"Saxton is complaining bitterly to me, Miss Carné, that you have no use for him," Anne smiled at Cecilia.

"I was trying to get her to prescribe some way to get your attention," he explained.

Cecilia looked from one to the other silently.

"I tell him every woman answers to some signal, and he will just have to experiment until he finds out what your particular susceptibility is."

"I am going to try wearing an automobile horn, and blowing to her. Subtlety, wit, sarcasm, all my regular fascinations have been trotted out in vain; she never notices them."

"How silly you are!" said Cecilia bluntly, and at Anne's peal of laughter, Saxton collapsed entirely.

Richard came to the door and beckoned Anne.

"Do you want to stay here for dinner?" he asked her.

"Why, yes, don't you?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"The Judge has ordered the dinner now, Richard. I thought you agreed to stay when it was proposed."

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"I'll stay if you want to," he said.

She stepped out on the porch, and he followed.

"Richard, why don't you want to stay?"

"I just don't like this man, that's all. Bobby was terribly disappointed over our missing dinner with him. I told him you would tuck him in and hear his prayers before he goes to sleep."

"I'll run over now, if he's really unhappy."

"No, I explained it all to him. It's funny how the little beggar understands. He thought it over and said, 'Well, if de Judge needs her a lot, I'll lend her to him; but I want her a lot too.'"

"Oh, Richard, I've got to go to him this minute."

"He was satisfied with the idea that you would come in time to say good-night."

"Is n't it awful to look back over what we've missed with Bobby?"

"Yes. It's tough on the boy, but I guess we missed the most by it."

"It was Judge Carteret who opened my eyes to my own baby," Anne said, and Richard's thoughts flew back to the night when the Judge had called Bobby a "personality." That was the

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first time he had ever given his son a thought, and he echoed Anne's words to himself, although without her feeling of gratitude to the Judge.

When the Barretts had disappeared Saxton said to Cecilia, "I'm sorry you think I'm too silly and trivial to notice."

"What difference does it make what I think?"

"It makes a good deal to me."

"I fail to see why it should."

"Because I want your good opinion."

"I don't like young men. I can't talk to them. They are full of themselves, their interests, their amusements, their love affairs — and I'm not interested."

"You think we're all conceited prigs?"

"All I've met are."

"I shall prove to you that there are exceptions."

"What's the use? We shall not see each other again in all probability."

"Don't you make that mistake; I intend to see a great deal of you."

She turned upon him angrily. "No, you will not! No one shall see a great deal of me. I came out here because I want to be alone.

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People nag me like gnats. I want to work with the big silences all about me. I don't want you with your jokes and your epigrams and your pert cynicisms. I want the big things that grow in solitude."

Saxton stood speechless while her words lashed him. The girl went to the door and would have run away had not the Judge barred her exit.

"I want to go home — don't ask me to stay," she said, her eyes shining.

"That shall be as you like, Miss Carné," he answered gravely.

"I have no place here — no business beginning things with all of you — I'll get caught again."

"Caught?"

"In the web of little activities, hateful little human interests and passions."

"'Hateful little human interests and passions,'" the Judge repeated slowly. "I sometimes wonder if Divinity is n't made of such stuff as human interests and passions."

"No, no!" cried Cecilia passionately. "Divinity is Beauty, and Beauty sits apart, in the highest heavens, above all human reach. It is

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only through a withdrawal from men that we can truly worship her."

"My child, Divinity is Love, and it is only through service — my hand upon the next man's shoulder — that we can truly worship."

A look of fear came over the girl's face.

"I must go," she said, and ran past him and away. The Judge looked after her, puzzled, and then he turned to Graves. The younger man's face was white and stern.

"Did our eccentric young friend open fire on you, Saxton?"

"Yes, Judge, she did, and I think I'm mortally wounded."

CHAPTER IX

THE JUDGE AND BOBBY MAKE A CALL

IT was Saturday, and a holiday for Richard. Since the first day of their sojourn at the Lodge, Richard's special hobby and delight had been the vegetable garden suggested by Cecilia Carné. The Saturday following her visit, he came out from town laden with a stupendous package of seeds, which he unpacked and discoursed upon to Anne's edification and Bobby's delight. Each Saturday since they had put in a few more seeds.

Armed with several books on gardening, which they consulted momentarily (for they were as ignorant as Bobby), the three of them laid out and planted their wonderful first garden. Richard had bought seeds enough to plant an entire meadow, and he insisted upon crowding them all in, so that they were forced to make two small overflow gardens, one for Anne and one for Bobby.

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"Bobby is going to learn all about a garden while he is young," said his father. "The idea of a man of my age not knowing how to plant a potato, or a common garden squash."

"I suppose father and mother Barrett scarcely foresaw your taste for farming," laughed Anne.

"Now, Bobby," began his father, "this is a seed; take a good look at it."

Bobby inspected it solemnly.

"It's a pumpkin seed, and you may dig a hole, and we will plant it in your garden."

"Plant it in my darden!" and the youthful gardener began to dig vigorously.

"Here, here, not clear through to China; just a moderately deep hole."

"What's dat?"

"Moderately deep? Not too deep. Now, put the little seed to bed."

"Put lil seed to bed," repeated Bobby, suiting the action to the word.

Anne looked up from the garden-book and smiled at them.

"Is de lil seed dead, daddy?"

"No, it's asleep. Now what do you think is going to happen to that seed?"

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Bobby considered the subject in all seriousness.

"Is it doin' to heaven, Dod west its sowl?" he added, in such perfect imitation of Mrs. O'Brien that Richard roared with laughter. Anne drew Bobby to her.

"The little seed lies down there in its warm bed, Bobolink, and pretty soon the rain comes and gives it a drink, and the sunshine comes and gives it food; and the first thing you know, up comes a little shoot."

"Where?" said Bobby, inspecting the spot.

"Not yet, not for a long time. Then the shoot gets to be a vine, with big yellow flowers on it."

"Does it drow up to the sky?"

"Of course not. No vine grows up to the sky," his father replied.

"Jack de Giant Killer's one did."

"Jack the what? Oh, yes, so it did. I forgot about that one."

"I wish mine would drow to de sky so I could do up an' see Dod."

Anne caught him up into her lap and kissed him.

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"We don't want you to go and see God, you precious Bobolink, we can't spare you."

"I would n't stay vewy long, mudder, I 'd dust say 'How do' to Him, cause I like Him."

Richard wanted to laugh, but Anne was very serious, so he did n't dare.

"You like Him? You like God?"

"Yes. I play wif Him, when I'm in town an' it's Bidgie's day out. Bidgie says He's awound all de time, so I play wif Him an' I tall Him Doddie."

Neither of his parents knew just what to do with the situation. They both felt the unconscious rebuke of his neglected babyhood, and Anne almost wept at his childish irreverence. It was Richard who came to the rescue.

"You've got a daddy and a mother and a Judge and a Bridget and a Hulda and an Omar and all sorts of people to play with now, son."

"Yes, I like it now."

"And mother forgot the practical end to her story in her poetical introduction. After the vine grows up and the yellow flowers die, the big yellow pumpkin comes up and it gets bigger and bigger and bigger —"

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"Big enough for a Cinderella coach?"

"Big enough for a small-sized Cinderella, I think; and the next thing you know, Bridget O'Brien brings us in a beautiful pumpkin pie, and we eat it up and smack our lips for more."

"Eat up the lil seed, an' Cinderella's coach, an' big yellow flowers?" protested his son.

"Now, he 's got you," laughed Anne.

"Yes, that is why we plant it, to give us food."

"Does it hurt it?"

"Hurt the pumpkin? No, it likes it."

"Likes to be pie?"

"Um-hum. You see, the pumpkin is educated up to a point where its only object is to be pie. And there is a lesson for all of us,—if we would just submit to being pies, instead of trying to be some fancy kind of dessert, when Nature meant us for plain pumpkin."

Bobby began to dig up the lately planted seed.

"What are you doing?" asked Anne.

"I want to look an' see if it 's a pie yet."

"Look here, sir," said his paternal parent, foreseeing garden troubles, "if you ever dig up anything that we plant in the garden, it will die and there won't be any garden."

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"It kills little seeds to look at them, dear," his mother explained.

Bobby's gentle heart responded to this appeal.

"Bobby won't look at lil seeds," he promised.

Anne began arranging the seeds in piles on the wheelbarrow, with a tag for each pile, so that Richard could get at them more easily. Just as she got the last heap marked, Bridget O'Brien called to her from the house, and she had to leave them.

"Don't you touch while mother's gone," she warned.

At the very moment of her disappearance into the house, Omar bounded into the garden, and in his attempt to salute his good friend Bobby, he upset barrow, seeds, and all, and mixed them in a hopeless mass.

"Dog-gone it!" cried Richard impatiently.

"Yes, dog did it," Bobby admitted, "but he did n't mean to, daddy, he was just bein' polite."

"Polite? It was blamed impolite, I think."

"No, it's polite for a dog to jump up, an' bark, an' wiggle his tail for 'How do.'"

"How in thunder am I going to know which

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is which?" muttered Richard, on his knees before the seeds. He sorted them out as well as he could, and he and Bobby continued with their planting. As they finished the last row, hot and panting with much bending over, they prepared to call time, when Cecilia Carné came along and stopped. Since the night of the Judge's dinner they had seen her but rarely. She seemed to avoid them as much as possible.

"How does your garden grow?"

"Pretty well. It's hard work, though, bending over so long. We've just decided upon union hours, and we're about to quit. Won't you come in?"

"Omar," she called, "who said you could come over here?" Omar came to her, wagging his tail apologetically.

"I did. I bevited him to tome evwy day."

"I don't want him wandering about the neighborhood, as I never know where he is." Then she turned to Richard. "What did you put in here?"

"A thousand dollars' worth of everything! We expect to supply ourselves and all the

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neighbors. We've laid out three gardens, one for each of us. We hope you will help yourself freely, Miss Carné."

"Thanks. You never can count on a garden until it's above ground. I've had some experience with the inborn obstinacy of vegetables."

She called Omar and went off toward the woods.

"Good-morning," called a voice from the direction of the house, as Cecilia disappeared. "Laying out a Garden of Eden?"

"It's de Judge," called Bobby ecstatically, and rushed toward him. Judge Carteret kissed him, and swung him to his shoulder.

"Morning, Judge. Great day, is n't it?"

"All days at Hillcrest are great days, whether it rains, or blows, or the sun shines. I can never make you and your wife understand what this place has done for me, or how indebted I feel to both of you good friends."

"It's a great old place, I tell you. Judge, you ought to have a garden. It's the greatest sport there is for the money. Beats golf and automobiling all hollow. We're going to have a fine lay-out here. In my garden, the first one

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we planted, there is something peeping up already. We don't know what it is, because Bobby took the tag off, but it's something."

"Bobby took de tags," laughed the youngster.

"Bobby is a rascal," said the Judge. "I'll put in my order now for fresh vegetables for the entire season, and go shares on expense with you. Bobby, I am going for a tramp in the woods; do you know any boys who would like to go along?"

"Yes, I do; I would lite to. Daddy, tan I do?"

"If the Judge wants to bother with you."

"Bother? He's the best company I find anywhere. Come on, sir, on your own two feet."

He put the lad down, and with his hand on the boy's shoulder, the two took the wood road that Cecilia had taken a few moments before.

Richard sat down on the wheelbarrow and wiped the "honest sweat of toil" from his brow. He lit a cigar and browsed comfortably in the fields of thought. Presently, however, a frown came on his face, as if some part of the mental horizon was clouded. Life had opened up a great many undiscovered tracts to Richard since

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his failure. All his young experience had revolved about one central pivot — pleasure, so that thirty found him rather satiated with the things that money and leisure can buy a man. Not that he had ever been a boy of low tastes, or licentious life, but where Pleasure is the one goddess, her votaries conceive the realities of life to be mere words. Richard and his young companions had scorned work, ambition, wedded love, parenthood, and home duties, as laws unto the middle-class man, but from which birth, training, and desire excluded them.

So it was an immature boy who faced the sharp disgrace of failure, and in the succeeding months Richard had taken his first steps in the realm of manhood. Touched, and in a way humiliated, by Anne's sturdy championship, he saw himself quite plainly as she had seen him, stripped, ashamed, dishonored. To the outward eye their relations seemed to have changed very little since their coming to the country, but there was a subtle difference which they both were aware of; and now sitting out in the June sunshine, on the wheelbarrow, Richard put it fairly to himself that what he wanted most now was

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Anne's respect, because without that he could never hope to win her love.

He looked his dislike of the Judge straight in the eyes, and acknowledged that it was Anne's admiration of the fine man that had hurt him and made him so unreasonable. He knew how contemptible was his first suspicion of their attraction for one another, and he shuddered at the thought of Anne's discovery of his jealousy.

"I've been a regular rotter," he said to himself. "But I'll measure up a little better with him, from now on, so help me — Anne!" he added.

"Socrates addressing the vegetable kingdom from a wheelbarrow?" called Anne from the doorway. He beckoned to her and watched her as she came toward him.

"Nancy, you look ten years younger since we left town."

"I am ten years younger."

"I want to confess something. I've been having a few things out with myself, and I'm all wrong about the Judge. He's a fine chap."

"Richard, I'm so glad," Anne said, enthusiastically, and slipped her arm about his

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shoulders. He drew her to him and leaned his head against her.

"Some day I want you to admire me as much as you do him," he said.

"I think he's a fine model, dear. I've been so unhappy over your dislike of him; I could n't understand it."

"I've acted like a cub, and I know why now," admitted Richard.

"Has he been having a heart-to-heart with himself?" asked Anne, smoothing back his hair off his hot forehead. He suddenly stood up and took her hands, holding them tightly.

"Anne, I don't want you to treat me as you do Bobby. I don't want you to care for me as your other boy, who has been beaten by the schoolmaster."

"Why, Richard!"

"I want you to love me as a man, as your husband, or not at all. I shall make you love me that way!"

He left her hastily and went into the house, and Anne sank down on the wheelbarrow, in a daze.

"Why, Richard! Why, Richard Barrett!"

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she said to the surrounding atmosphere, and blushed like a rose.

In the meantime the Judge and Bobby made their way through the wood, enjoying every step as they went. Bobby's constant questions about everything they saw delighted the Judge. He answered him always with the same consideration and thought that he would have used toward a grown companion.

"But I would n't hurt de squirrels, Judge, so why do they be 'fwaid of me?"

"Well, if you should see a lion coming through the woods you would be frightened, would n't you?"

"Yes!"—wide-eyed.

"That is just because you're not used to lions. The lion would be just as afraid of you as the squirrel is, because lions are not used to little boys."

Bobby thought about this for several moments.

"Lions, an' squirrels, an' birdies, an' hoppers, an' flies an' such a lot of fings are n't used to lil boys."

The Judge's laugh echoed through the wood.

"True, my young friend, all these fascinating

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creatures do seem created to resent the scientific interest of the small boy."

"Are n't ladies used to lil boys?"

"Ladies?" inquired the Judge, somewhat at a loss.

"The 'fwaid lady wuns away just like de squirrels do."

"The 'fraid lady? Who is she?"

"She 's — why — she 's de 'fwaid lady."

"Oh, I see. She 's in a story. What is she afraid of? Not boys, surely."

"No, not in a stowy, she 's twue; she 's dot a dog."

"A dog?" The Judge's usual intuition failed him.

"Dere she tomes; she 's de 'fwaid lady!" Bobby cried, pointing his stubby finger to where Cecilia Carné approached through the wood. The Judge watched her slip among the trees, like a wood thing. She wore a red sweater to-day, that showed a brilliant spot of color among the tree trunks, like a scarlet tanager. She was like that rare bird, the Judge thought, swift of wing, shy, exotic.

At sight of Bobby, Omar plunged through the

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wood, with a bark of welcome. Cecilia stopped, startled, and saw them. She had not met the Judge since the night she ran away from his house. She walked up to him and spoke directly, without greeting.

"I'm sorry. I acted like a silly child; you must have been disgusted with me."

The Judge spanned the bridge of her thought instantly.

"No, I was not disgusted with you. I am never disgusted with people of convictions; it is only those without convictions, whom I find unpardonable."

"Don't talk to her, Judge," said Bobby.

Cecilia frowned at the interruption.

"Is there no escaping that child? He is always under foot," she exclaimed impatiently.

The Judge put his hand on the boy's shoulder, and there was a touch of hauteur in his voice.

"Bobby is one of my best friends, and I cannot allow him to intrude where he is not welcome. Come along, lad."

He lifted his hat, in his courteous way, and walked on. Cecilia bit her lip, and then called impulsively, "Oh, I always must offend you!"

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The Judge stopped and turned toward her.

"Have you ever noticed how fine the line is where personality ends, and abnormality begins? I think abnormality must always offend."

"You mean I am abnormal?" she demanded.

"A dislike of children, in a woman, is certainly abnormal."

"I don't understand them, they embarrass me. I resent their appeal to me!"

"Ah! So you are the 'Fraid lady!"

"What?"

"That is what Bobby has named you, the 'Fraid lady. I wonder if the child has found the key to you, Miss Carné."

"I am afraid of nothing!" she cried.

"You're afraid of everything,—of emotion, of love, of life itself. You're afraid of sympathy, of understanding. Why, you admit that you are even afraid of the appeal of a child."

"Because I choose to live at peace, outside the boiling-pot, you have no right to condemn me."

"Condemn you!"

"I can't bear life in the raw, I get sick with the warfare of it; the emotional demands on me wring me dry! I have some rights to myself —

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to my own ownership of myself,— and I demand this freedom. That is all I ask. Is it so much?"

Judge Carteret saw how deeply the girl was aroused. He motioned Bobby to run ahead with Omar, and he fell in step beside her.

"Tell me something about yourself, Miss Carné. Who are your people? How do you happen to be living out here by yourself?"

"I haven't any people. My father was French, a painter, a diplomat, many things. My mother was a Spanish dancer when he married her. I was a child of their first passion, and the object of their subsequent revolt. They both hated me. I had no real chance from the first. I was made of tawdry stuff, tinsel and tissue; I'm not the stuff that wears!"

"Where are those people now?"

"I don't know — dead perhaps. There was some scandal and my mother went away. I heard she died in Madrid a year ago. My father left me as a substitute for rent, with a woman who kept a rooming-house."

"You poor child!"

"I don't want pity, I despise it. . . . I got out of the rooming-house as soon as I could."

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"You paint? Mrs. Barrett told me of her pleasure in finding that one of her favorite pictures was yours."

"I've always painted; that was in me, I suppose. The artists in the boarding-house used to give me their old paint tubes and their worn out brushes, and now and then they threw me a word of advice or help."

"How did you live?"

"Anyhow. I worked for the boarding-house keeper for my living. I got along somehow, read everything I could lay my hands on, and painted every minute I could steal away from my hateful duties. Finally, one of the men there got me a free scholarship in a night school."

"Good!"

"The man wanted to be paid, however, so I had to leave the boarding-house.— Well, anyway, I worked for two years, like a fiend, educating myself and learning to paint, and then I got a chance to teach at an art school, with enough to live on decently. I thought my future was assured, but the teaching did n't last long."

She laughed an ugly, discordant laugh.

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"They didn't like me there. I spent my nights wandering about the streets, trying to paint the night life of a city. I thought I had a great idea that would make me famous. But the trustees heard of it; they thought it was not respectable, a bad example for the students, and so forth. So I had to go."

"The pity of it!"

"No, it's all part and parcel of the innate cruelty of society. Unless you live according to the rules society has laid down, then society will crush you out, unless you are strong enough to live your own way, in spite of it. I hadn't the strength, I couldn't bear it alone, I'm too flimsy to bear things. I couldn't kill my soul to feed my body, as lots of the girls about me were driven to do, so I ran away. I came out here one day meaning to go into the lake. I found this empty cabin, and it tempted me. I didn't ask whose it was, I just took it. Little by little I've made things for it, and fixed it up, knowing that I was building on the sands, that sooner or later the order would come for me to move on. But at least I've had one winter of peace."

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"How do you live?"

"As I can. I paint all the time, and a dealer in town sells something for me now and then. But I'm free, I can work out my own salvation."

They came out of the woods, and into the clearing about her house, as she spoke.

"Here is my kingdom," she said. She went to the door and threw it open. "Will you come into my house, Judge Carteret? You will be my first invited guest. Ask the child if he will come."

"We will both be charmed to come, now and often in the future, I trust," he said, and followed her in, Bobby's hand in his.

She touched a match to the wood ready laid for a fire, and waited for him to speak. As she stooped on the hearth, watching him, Bobby came and stood before her.

"'Fwaid lady, don't be 'fwaid of Bobby. Bobby likes you."

She looked at him intently a moment. Then her hand flashed across his hair.

"Thank you," she said, and motioned him to sit down.

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Omar came and sat on the hearth beside his mistress, as if he realized she was under some excitement. She threw her arm about him.

"Omar loves you too, 'Fwaid lady," Bobby ventured, and she smiled and nodded at him.

The Judge saw it all, with his seeing eye, although he seemed to be absorbed in a study of the walls.

"This is a home, not an abiding-place," he said at last. "It speaks of you in every detail. This frieze is a joy, a real joy!"

He came and looked down at her interestedly.

"How about these studies of night life in the city? Have you them here? I should be so interested in seeing them."

She hesitated a moment, chin on hand.

"I have never shown them to any one — they are my best work. Someday they will be my masterpiece."

"I may have asked too great a favor."

"No; I 'd like to show them to you."

He sat down beside Bobby on the settle, and presently she put the portfolio in his hands. He turned the pages over slowly. Once he exclaimed and looked up at her.

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“Child, did your young eyes read this inferno?”

She paced about restlessly, and did not answer him. Bobby and Omar slipped away out-of-doors to play. Their voices came in at the door and that alone broke the stillness. When the Judge finished, he closed the portfolio with a look of wonderment on his face. He went to the girl and took her cold hands in his.

“I was wrong, I apologize. You are not afraid of life; no coward could have looked deep into its depths as you have done. Rather you have the courage of a Titan. But where did you get this insight, this power to understand? Why, it has taken me a lifetime to know what you have fathomed in your short experience!”

“Do you see now, why I must worship Beauty?—why I want to shut my eyes to all the ugliness and cling to what is clean and pure and uplifting, as Nature is?”

“Yes, I see. But even Nature in some of her processes is vile, ugly, debased.”

“But she works up, always up.”

“So does humanity, Child. We must believe that, or life would not be possible. You will

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come to see the human process is clean and uplifting in its final outcome."

"Perhaps so; it will take time. You must give me a whole lifetime to accomplish that."

"I give you all eternity," he smiled, and went to the door to call Bobby. "We're making a long visit for our first one, Robert. Shall we go now? Mother may think we are lost."

"Does de 'Fwaid lady want us to go?"

"I want you to come again," she said to him.

"Us will, won't us, Judge?"

"Often, Boy. Will you come to dinner some night with Bobby and me, at my house, Miss Carné?"

"I'd like to. Thank you for understanding. I never spoke to any one of myself before."

"That is the highest compliment you could pay me, Miss Carné, and the one I treasure most. Good-day, friend."

They went on into the woods, and Cecilia stood long, looking after them.

"Bobby boy, the scarlet tanager sang its wonderful song for us!" said the Judge enigmatically.

CHAPTER X

CECILIA DINES OUT

THE Judge paced slowly up and down his wide veranda, waiting for his guest, Cecilia. He had invited the Barretts to join them, but they had gone into town, instead, to a farewell dinner with their respective parents, who were departing for Europe on the morrow.

The Judge was rather glad that it was so, and that he and Cecilia were to have the evening alone. He saw the diplomacy necessary to win the confidence of this strange girl, and he did not for an instant discount his interest in her. She seemed to him a unique figure. In all the years that the endless human army had marched before him in review, he remembered not one like Cecilia Carné.

Life had bruised her, and it would take long and careful nursing to win her back to the nor-

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mal, to real sanity. His was a long and fruitful service in the healing of the mental and the spiritual sick, and perhaps, he mused, he might win this passionate girl back to "sweetness and light."

He glanced at his watch and then toward the wood. She was not in sight, so he determined to go after her, lest she lose her courage and decide not to come at all. He strode off toward the cabin, and came upon her, making her way slowly through the wood, Omar beside her. She was as usual without a hat, and wore her short skirt and sailor's blouse; and there was a sort of savage beauty in the high carriage of her head, and the animal grace of her slender body. She waved her hand to him.

"A very good evening to you, my friend," said the Judge, taking her hand.

"You were coming to meet me? How nice of you!"

"You must not mind, if I make you a very frequent excuse for coming through this bit of wood."

"This is an enchanted place. I love it."

He fell in step and they loitered along.

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"Were you never afraid out here, alone, this winter?"

"Never. I had Omar."

"Where did you get the dog, Miss Carné?"

"I did n't get him, he came to me. The first night I spent in the cabin he came and whined and cried at the door, so I took him in. He did not have a collar, or anything by which I could discover his owners, and he has never made any effort to run away; so I decided that he wanted to be a hermit too, and I took him into the firm."

Omar wagged his tail frantically to show that he understood, and the Judge patted him. As they came out onto the driveway, the Judge exclaimed, "Fresh carriage tracks. I have had a guest."

Cecilia half drew back.

"No doubt they disposed of him, at the house."

As they approached the door, Saxton Graves greeted them.

"Why, Saxton, where did you come from?" the Judge asked.

"Town, where it's piping hot! The Barretts asked me out to dinner, forgot all about it, and

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have gone to town themselves. I came to beg hospitality of you, but if you have a guest —”

“You remember Miss Carné?”

“Well, rather.”

Cecilia bowed distantly.

“Excuse me a minute, and I ’ll have an extra place added.”

“You are sure I ’m not intruding? I can catch that seven o’clock back to town.”

“You shall not go back to town unfed. Pardon me, Miss Carné.”

“Will it spoil the whole evening for you, if I stay?” Saxton asked, when the Judge had left them.

“It makes no difference to me, one way or the other.”

“Don’t I make any impression on you at all?”

“No.”

He turned away and walked moodily to the end of the porch. The Judge found them so, and gave a sigh for his doomed dinner party. Under some circumstances, three is an unendurable crowd!

“Beautiful view from there, is n’t it, Saxton?”

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"What? I beg pardon."

"I thought you were looking at the view."

"The view? Oh, yes — yes — fine."

"Dinner is served, sir," announced the butler.

"It is a pity that we dine at the most beautiful hour of the summer day. That is one great advantage to my out-of-door dining-room,—it makes a slight concession to the poetical possibilities."

"Do you mean to say that you would rather see a good sunset, than eat a good dinner, Judge?"

"Certainly I do," smiled his host.

"Judge, Judge, will you never grow up? It is a disgraceful sign of adolescence to adore the setting sun."

"All the centuries of sun-worshipping ancestors cry out in me. I have the old impulse to fall upon my face before the daily miracle — but not the courage," he added, laughing.

"Fire is my deity," said Cecilia. "I should not mind the death pyre; I think that is a splendid way to greet death!"

"There's a cheerful idea for you! Fancy

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such a horror, in the face of a good dinner," cried Saxton, determinedly gay.

"This man is an idealist, a sentimentalist, Miss Carné, and his one idea is to hide behind the cloak of the materialist."

"Spare me, thou good and honorable Judge, spare me!"

"Why are you so afraid of being what you are?" Cecilia asked him. "You always make me feel that you are playing, that you cannot be in earnest."

"I should not dare to be in earnest before you, Miss Carné!"

"Why not?"

"You would not permit it."

Cecilia frowned at the personal flavor Graves had introduced, and the Judge came hastily to the rescue.

"I had an amusing incident in the court-room to-day, in the case of the People *versus* Conrad, Gridley, and Martin. Martin, who is an Irishman, was called to testify in regard to an outbreak of Union men against the police, at Crossroads, a night or two before the killing of

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this man Parker. It seems that a cordon of police marched to the hall out there, where a strike meeting was being held, to prevent any disturbance, and this man Martin told the court about the subsequent battle.

“ ‘Who began this disturbance?’ asked the Prosecuting Attorney.

“ ‘The police,’ answered Martin promptly.

“ ‘The police struck the first blow?’

“ ‘The police began the disturbance, sor.’

“ ‘How did they begin it?’

“ ‘Well, sor, I was the presidin’ officer av the meetin’, an’ I was in the middle av a stirrin’ speech, whin some durty bluecoat at the back av the hall began to snore so loud, I could n’t hear meself think. I called his attintion to the matter twicet, and thin I stipped down on the floor and give him hell! He called on the others, an’ we had a free-for-all.’

“ ‘But you said the police began the disturbance.’

“ ‘Sure, that’s what I’m tellin’ ye. I lave it to Yer Honor, if snorin’ ain’t a insult in the furst degree. ’T would be a poor-spirited orator that would n’t smash a man that snored at him!’

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"I had a fellow-feeling for the man," the Judge added; "you see, he did n't have a bailiff to assist, as I have."

Saxton laughed, and Cecilia smiled at the story.

"There is a great deal of interest in this case, is n't there?"

"Seems to be. Have you been reading about it, Miss Carné?" the Judge asked, just to draw her into the talk.

"I know something about the case. We all wanted it to go before a judge who was for the Unions," she added, to his utter surprise.

"Favorable to the Unions? That would be a strange position for a judge to take."

"You are not in favor of them, then?"

"How can anybody be in favor of them as long as they resort to murder as the quickest way to get rid of an enemy?" Saxton interposed.

"Do you think Conrad's killing of Parker was murder?" she asked the Judge.

"It is impossible for me to express myself on that point, Miss Carné. The case is under trial before me."

"I think Conrad and Gridley and Martin are

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patriots. Conrad did a great thing for our cause."

"Our cause?"

"Yes; the cause of Labor."

"So, you are a trades-unionist?"

"Yes, and a socialist."

"You, living like a nun in a convent, call yourself a socialist?" cried Graves in unfeigned astonishment.

"I advocate socialistic principles; and Conrad did away with a tyrant who blocked the way of the many."

"That comes dangerously near being anarchy, does n't it?" the Judge asked, gently.

"In this case there was no other way. If Parker had declared for Union Labor at Crossroads, thousands of men would have had an equal chance; but he declared for Open Shop, and he had to be removed. What is one man's life to the welfare of thousands?"

"Dangerous ground, my friend," warned the Judge.

"But Parker had brain, he was a power in the world, his one life was worth more than your thousands of blockheads!" Saxton said.

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“And who is responsible for these thousands of blockheads in the world? The Parkers of the world.”

“How do you make that out?” Graves demanded.

“The only chance for the working-man lies in the Union. This Parker and his kind want to set up a scale of wages in opposition to the Union scale; he wants to pick his men, Union and scabs together.”

“Why should n’t he, in his own business?”

“It is n’t his own business, it ’s the business of the men who do the labor! Besides, the minute you give him the power to pay what wages he sees fit, he becomes a tyrant; the men in his employ becomes his slaves, dependent on his whim for their support, subject to his dismissal, his abuse.”

“Abuse? In this day and age? The only down-trodden men I know are the big employers of labor. They can’t breathe for fear they’ll hurt some foreman’s feelings, and he’ll call a strike!” said Graves.

The Judge frowned at him, because he saw that he was annoying Cecilia.

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"So, your remedy is, Down with the Parkers?" he asked her.

"Yes, if they stand for the suppression of the many."

Saxton would not be quieted.

"Has n't Parker as much right to advocate Open Shop as your Union leader has to stand for Unionism?"

"My dear young people, do you realize that I sit for hours each day and listen to this case *pro* and *con*?"

"Beg pardon, Judge; you stopped us just in time to prevent a bloody conflict. I had no idea Miss Carné was such a fighter."

"I feel very strongly on the subject. I belong to the working classes myself," she said.

"So do we all, my dear young lady, all three of us," protested the Judge.

"Not in the same way. Your business is to help the man who has, to keep what he has; and mine is to help the man who has n't, to get what he needs."

The Judge smiled and shook his head.

"And what is my function?" asked Graves.

"To sit on the fence and make jokes at both of

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us," she retorted instantly, rising to follow the Judge into the library. Graves laughed and brought up the rear, protesting that she would not take him in earnest.

"Shall we stay in here or go on to the veranda for our coffee?" asked their host.

"Let us stay in here a moment, and then go out. I love this room," Cecilia said.

"So do I. Saxton has designed me a beautiful home for my friends, has he not?"

"Your friends?" she questioned.

"Yes, my books. I always think of this room as their home, where they entertain me as their guest. Think what a motley company we are in," he added, going up to one of the cases. "Stanch old Carlyle scowling here at Villon, the poet-vagabond; Kipling next door to John Bunyan; Socrates and Stevenson; Nordau and Maeterlinck — I refuse to sort them out according to their predilections. In this Home for Old and Indigent Books, this Retreat for Modern and Maudlin Books, this Hospital for Diseased and Neurotic Books, every fellow has to put up with his neighbor's viewpoint. Sometimes I fancy them o' nights, coming off their

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shelves and rushing into verbal combat. Such a clash of words, such a jumble of ideas — that would be a battle of the gods!"

Cecilia laughed aloud, and the Judge turned to her in surprise at the musical gurgle of laughter.

"I 'd like to referee a fight between old John Bunyan and D'Annunzio," said Saxton.

"I understand that Bunyan's life and D'Annunzio's principles don't go so badly together," laughed the Judge.

They wandered out to the porch and watched the moon come up out of the water, and they talked of many things; but the Judge held them down to a quiet key, for he was tired himself, and he felt that Cecilia had had excitement enough at the dinner-table.

When time came for her to go, he said to Saxton, "Will you walk along with Miss Carné, Saxton, as my deputy? I have several things to attend to yet to-night, and I am sure she will excuse me."

"Of course," said Cecilia. "I've enjoyed it, Judge Carteret. Thank you."

She gave him her hand and then turned and

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led the way abruptly down the drive and into the woods.

"I am not the least afraid, so you need not come," she said to Saxton.

"But I want to come," he said with a sigh.

"Come along, then, but don't be moony!" she ordered.

"There is not the least use in your trying to hide from me behind your wall of impersonality," he challenged her.

"No?"

"No. For I am the most persistent wall-climber you ever met in your life!"

"There are spikes on my wall!"

"Good. I enjoy spikes. I'm a collector of spikes."

"There is a fire-snorting monster behind the wall."

"Referring to yourself?"

"If you like."

"I have a fondness for adventure. Give me a guerdon and I'll capture your monster."

"I'm not in need of a knight, thank you."

"Are you in need of anything?"

"Yes; sleep."

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"Nothing of a more material nature, such as a lover, a slave, a husband?"

"Mercy, no! — pests, all of them."

"Ever tried them?"

"All but the last."

"And the greatest of these is the husband!"

"Greatest pest? I don't doubt it."

When they came to her cabin she faced about.

"Good-night," she said.

"Are n't you going to say that you enjoyed my company home?"

"Why should I? I told you I did n't want you to come."

"A less valiant man than I would give up, after that."

"Be a trifle less valiant, then."

"You flatter me. Do I understand that I am asked to call?"

"You do not."

"May I — please?"

"Certainly not."

"I 'm invited not to call?"

"Yes," with a sigh of patient endurance.

"You do not need a door mat?" persistently.

She had to smile at this in spite of herself.

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"Don't let me keep you," she said. "Good-night."

She opened the door and stepped inside.

"Good-night. I'll come around again, Lady, and see if there is anything you do need. You know the song about Cupid, the Peddler? That's me."

"I set my dog on peddlers."

"Dogs always take to me," he retorted.

He went off singing lustily about Cupid and his pack, filling all the woods with his clamor.

"That is the most persistent idiot it has ever been my misfortune to meet," said Cecilia, and smiled at the Man in the Moon, who winked and smiled back at her.

CHAPTER XI

BOBBY MAKES A FRIEND

CECILIA was paying her toll to the domestic gods, and giving her cabin a regular New England cleaning. She went at it with the same ardor that characterized her efforts in any direction, and nine o'clock of this particular morning saw all her Lares and Penates lined up in a well-dusted row in front of the house, while Cecilia, armed with a broom and a bucket, did valiant service within. Omar lay outside in the sun, his head on his paws, with the usual masculine irritation at such upheavals.

It was with a yelp of relief that he espied Bobby, all unattended, making through the wood toward the cabin. He rushed to meet him, and Bobby got down on his knees and hugged him and kissed him, taking especial care, however, not to crush a bunch of short-stemmed dande-

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lions, which he carried. When they appeared together, at Cecilia's door, she viewed them unenthusiastically.

"Mornin', 'Fwaid lady," crowed Bobby.

"Good-morning. Where did you come from?"

"My house. I tame all by myself, tause you said to tome again, so I did."

"Do they know where you are, at your house?"

He hesitated a moment.

"I did n't tell Bidgie esactly where I was went-ing, but she said I could play at the Judge's house; so I guessed I would liker to come to dis house."

"Who is Bidgie?"

"She 's — why she 's de nurse, an' de cook, when Hulda tan't tause she 's a gween Swede, an' Bidgie is evwything."

"The Irishwoman? Oh, yes, I remember her now."

"Yes, Iwish — norf countwy Iwish. I bwrought you some flowers, 'Fwaid lady."

He proffered the tired little bunch of weeds, and Cecilia took them seriously.

"Thank you; that was kind. I am cleaning

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house, to-day, so I suppose you would not care to come in."

"Oh, yes. I tan help; I always help Bidgie."

"What can you do?"

"I tan swash de water on, when she scwubs."

"But you would get all wet."

"Yes, dat 's why I like it."

"Don't you get scolded when you get wet?"

"No, I don't det scolded."

"Well, come in, if you want to. Here's an extra rag, you might go ahead and swash. I'll come after and scrub up."

"All wight. Tan't Omar tome in?"

"No, he tracks the floor up."

Bobby knelt down and whispered to the dog, then remembering his manners, he flushed and explained —

"I dust explained to him dat I had to swash a lil, an' I'd be out pretty soon, so it would n't hurt his feelings."

"You're a kind-hearted little boy."

"I don't know if I am or not," he said shyly, "but I dust love Omar."

"Why don't you stay out and play with him, then?"

Bobby Makes a Friend

"Tould you stay, too?"

"No, I have to finish house-cleaning."

"Bobby will help you so we tan tome out an' play wif him."

"All right. We'll get to work, then."

Down on his marrow bones went Bobby, his fat bare legs so near the girl that she had an almost irresistible desire to pinch them. They worked in silence for a little, and then he reversed himself, and sat down, just ahead of the wet spot. Cecilia squatted back on her heels and inspected him.

"It makes you tired on your hands and foots, don't it?" he inquired politely.

"It does. It's a hateful position and it's a useless performance. In a week it will be dirty again. Why should we bother so? Animals are clean and yet they don't clean their holes."

Bobby caught the peroration.

"Don't lions an' tigers scwub?"

"I never heard of it."

"Does Omar scwub?"

"No, he's the man of the family. He lives with me and I do the scrubbing."

"Let's teach him to scwub."

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"He would n't hold the wet rag in his mouth."

Bobby thought deeply.

"Have you got a mopper?"

"A mopper?"

"Kind of wet fing on a stick."

"Oh, you mean a mop. Like this?"

She held up an improvised mop, and Bobby seized it, wet it, and dragged it to the door, leaving a long snake-like trail across the clean floor.

"Omar," he called; "tome, Omar."

Omar responded joyfully, and Bobby pried open his mouth and inserted the mop-handle between his teeth.

"Scwub, Omar, scwub," he ordered.

Omar dropped it in disgust, and made for the door. They could n't play any of their tricks on him.

"Pick it up, sir," Cecilia said.

He stopped and surveyed her, with an *Et-tu-Brute* look, and then grasped the mop-handle. Bobby pulled him about, calling him to follow. After his first disgust he decided to humor them, so he shook the mop-stick about in mimic fury, and spotted up the clean floor with his dirty paws.

Bobby Makes a Friend

The peals of laughter that greeted Mrs. O'Brien, as she hurried through the woods in search of Bobby, brought her straight to the cabin door, where she stopped in amazement. Cecilia sat on her heels in one corner, Bobby cross-legged opposite her, and in the centre of the room Omar rushed the mop about madly. The two were screaming with laughter, and it was plain to see that Omar was grinning behind the mop-handle.

"In the name av St. Patrick, phwat are ye doin'?"

Bobby clapped his hands.

"It's Bidgie, 'Fwaid lady. We're teachin' Omar to scwub. He'll scwub for you, too," he added, with his seraphic smile.

"An' that he won't, the crazy thing. D'ye call that scrubbin'?" she demanded, pointing to the dirty floor.

"I call it an experiment," Cecilia answered. "We have n't perfected the scheme yet. Bobby invented it, so I tried it to please him."

"He's full av inventin', he is. Who tould ye ye could come way off here in the woods, scarin' the loife out av us?" she demanded.

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"I fought I would tell when I dot home."

"Ye did, did ye? A foine idea that is, an' me runnin' me legs aff, an' nearly havin' a connip-tion fit over yer fallin' in the lake."

Bobby hurried to her. "Oh, Bidgie, not a heart 'nption?"

"Sure I did."

"When I'm bad she dets a ache in her heart," he explained to Cecilia.

"I asked him to come over and he forgot to mention it to you that he was accepting my invitation."

"Well, home ye go an' play in the gyarden."

"No, I got to help de 'Fwaid lady."

"Hilp the what?"

"That's what he calls me. Let him stay if he wants to."

"Why do ye call her that, darlin'?"

"Cause I like to; sides, I don't know her honust-to-goodness name."

"My name is Cecilia Carné."

"Yes, her name is dat," he nodded to Mrs. O'Brien.

"Sure he ain't in yer way, miss?"

"No, I never found cleaning so painless."

Bobby Makes a Friend

"'T is an awful mess ye've got there, Bobby! D'ye know the way home, if I lave ye?"

"I'll bring him home," Cecilia offered.

"Very good, miss, he can stay a little, thin."

She nodded and left, and they exchanged triumphant glances.

"She tatched us," Bobby chuckled.

"She did. Now, we must dismiss Omar without any character at all. I'd never recommend him for a scrubber. We'll have to do it all again."

"All wight," said her assistant cheerfully.

They drove Omar forth and went at it again. Once, at a resting stage, Bobby's eyes fastened themselves on the frieze.

"I don't know if dat is out-of-doors, or in-doors."

"It is out-of-doors brought in."

"It's nice. Where do you sleep, 'Fwaid lady?"

"On that bench out there, hauled up before the fire."

"Not in a bed?"

"That is my bed."

"Is dis your bedwoom?"

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"Yes."

"I wish I had a twee woom."

"Maybe I 'll make you one, some day."

"Did Dod make dose twees for you?"

"I suppose He made the ones outside, and I tried to copy them."

"He knows you 've dot 'em in here," he assured her wisely.

"Do you think so?"

"He 's awound all de time; Bidgie says so. He 's here wight now, only you tan't see Him dood."

Cecilia's eyes softened.

"I believe He is here, now," she nodded.

They worked and talked busily all the morning. They discovered a mutual fondness for Peter Pan, and discussed the fascinating possibilities of training Omar for the part of nurse. Cecilia made no concession to his youth, nor he to her age, but they both had an innate honesty, and that was the plank of understanding on which they crossed.

Once he leaned against her knee to look at something which she was dusting, and she trembled and pushed him away almost roughly.

Bobby Makes a Friend

But she went and put his short-stemmed dandelions in a bowl, as if in justification, or apology. When everything was dusted and brushed and set in order and sweetness, she suggested that they walk through the woods toward the Lodge, and gather fresh flowers for the vases.

“An’ take Omar?”

“Of course.”

“Oh, he ’ll like it, won’t he? Why tan’t dogs pick flowers, ’Fwaid lady?” he asked her.

“Call me Cecilia,” she said, as he ran out to the dog.

Cecilia stopped to twist up her tousled hair, and the voices of the boy and the dog came in to her in a sort of joyous duet. She stopped and listened to it, with a half smile. “You are even afraid of the appeal of a child!” she heard the Judge’s voice saying. She shook herself. “I ’m getting sentimental,” she grumbled, and went to the door.

Bobby and Omar were playing a game of catch-as-catch-can on the edge of the bluff. It consisted of Omar’s chasing down the bank after sticks which Bobby tossed into the air. As Cecilia came out and called to them, Bobby was

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holding a big branch high above his head, urging Omar to get ready. The dog jumped and barked excitedly, and then Bobby threw it with all his might, and all at once, Cecilia never knew how, they went over the edge together, boy and dog.

Never a scream, never a sound to break the silence, but just the hush of stalking Death followed. The bank went down some sixty feet, a sheer drop to the beach below, and it was covered with underbrush and some stunted oaks. Cecilia ran to the edge and looked down, sick at the thought — and saw Omar tugging at something half way down.

She plunged down toward them, and Omar cried and whined as she came. It was all she could do to stop herself in the descent, beside the small figure. There was blood on his hands and face and dress. Cecilia pushed Omar away, and knelt beside him. She tore open his blouse and laid her ear to his heart, in a panic of dread; but it was beating.

She gathered him tenderly in her arms, and began to climb, slowly and painfully toward the top, following Omar's lead. She never knew

Bobby Makes a Friend

how long it took her, nor when or how she reached the cabin, but she found herself there at last. She laid Bobby on her bed and washed off his face and torn hands, and finally he stirred a little.

“O God!” she said softly, “O God!”

Bobby had said God was there, a moment since; perhaps He would hear her, for the boy’s sake, if she called Him.

“’Fwaid lady, I ’m hurted,” he moaned. She bent and kissed him on the mouth.

“We’re going to go through the woods to the Lodge now, Bobby,” she whispered; and he dropped off into unconsciousness again.

She took him up, and went out into the woods, toward the Lodge, and all the way she whispered with Bobby’s simple faith, “O God! O God!”

CHAPTER XII

BOBBY

WHEN she emerged from the woods with her burden she came upon Anne, working in the garden. She did not see Cecilia until she was nearly up to her, and then she straightened with a smile of welcome, that froze on her face. She dropped her basket and shears, and hurried to meet her.

"What is it? What is the matter with Bobby?" she asked in alarm.

"He is not dead," Cecilia replied.

"Not dead? What is the matter with him? What have you done to him? Tell me quickly!" Anne took him in her arms, where he lay white and still, his eyes closed.

"He was playing on the cliff in front of my house, and Omar accidentally tipped him over, and they both fell down the bank. He is not dead; he spoke to me after I got him up the hill," Cecilia said laconically.

"If you've killed him I shall never forgive you. You hate him — I've seen it in your eyes, when he's near you!" Anne burst out.

"He made friends with me to-day, for the first time," Cecilia said softly.

Anne tried to carry him into the house, but she trembled so that she was in danger of falling with him; so Cecilia took him from her, and they went in together. Mrs. O'Brien was in the living room and turned at their entrance.

"Bobby is killed, I think," Anne announced to her, beside herself with terror.

With a cry the old woman fell upon Cecilia and took the boy from her, crooning and calling to him. She felt him all over and listened to his heart. When she touched his arm, he groaned.

"He is not dead; he spoke to me," Cecilia repeated. "I'll get the doctor."

She went to the telephone, and Anne threw herself down in the corner, wild-eyed and sobbing. Mrs. O'Brien spoke.

"Phwat did she do to him?"

"I don't know. She says the dog pushed him off the cliff."

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"She 's a divil. I 've known ut all along, an' I let him go to her house. May the Lord in His mercy forgive me! Loike as not she 's a witch, livin' there in the woods, all alone."

Anne roused herself.

"No, no, Bridget, we must not blame her. She says Bobby made friends with her to-day."

"The doctor is in this neighborhood, and they can get him on the wire. He ought to be here in a few minutes. We had better get Bobby to bed."

Cecilia and Mrs. O'Brien together lifted and carried him upstairs, Anne following helplessly. They took off his clothes and got him to bed. He cried and groaned now and then, but Cecilia bound up his wounds and made him fairly comfortable.

All the time Anne sat apart sobbing and praying, too crazed with fear to take any part in their efforts to relieve the child. Cecilia came to her and tried to arouse her, but she seemed hysterical. Cecilia shook her by the shoulders, and ordered her to go downstairs for more hot water and bandages. She did not resent the command, but obeyed blindly. She got her scattered senses

together the minute she had something to do, and when the doctor came, she was calm.

It seemed a century later, although it was but an hour, that Cecilia met the doctor at the foot of the stairs. She had been waiting for him in the living-room, and her face showed the terrible suspense she had endured. Bobby's room was just above, and every groan and cry had seemed a blow upon her bare heart.

"Will he live?" she demanded.

"Oh, yes; there is no vital damage done. He is much bruised and some bones broken, but it was a wonderful escape. Did he strike a bush or a tree? What broke the fall?"

"He was in a cleared space when I got to him, and the dog held him by the dress."

"We're indebted to the dog for the boy's life, I should say. He'll pull through all right, he's young and strong. Broken bones are not serious at his age. You had better have a glass of wine, Miss Carné. You are all unstrung," he added, for she was shaking in a nervous chill.

"I'm all right. I've been terribly anxious. It happened at my house, you know."

"So they tell me. You and the boy are great friends," he added kindly.

"Yes, we're friends," she said abruptly, and went upstairs, and waited outside Bobby's door, listening for his voice. Anne came out later and found her there.

"Why, Miss Carné!" she said.

"How you must hate me!"

"Hate you? Indeed I do not. I don't know what I said to you out there, at first, but I was mad with terror. If I said anything cruel, you must forgive me. I don't blame you or hold you responsible in any way. But he is so precious and we've had him such a little while. I thought God was going to take him away to punish me. That's why I was so beside myself."

"It happened at my house, it was my dog, and he might have been killed. Oh, I should have blamed you and hated you, if he had been mine," she replied passionately, pacing up and down the room.

"Please don't feel that way about it. No one was to blame, and if we all give ourselves to helping him get well, there will be no time for

such thoughts. If only Richard would come! I know he has not had time to make it yet, but it seems hours since we telephoned him."

"What did you tell him?"

"That Bobby was not well, and I wanted him to come out as soon as he could."

"I'll go to the station and meet him, and tell him."

"Oh, that will be a great help. Come and have lunch with us, and we'll all watch together."

"You're fine!" Cecilia thanked her. "I could n't come to lunch, I could n't choke anything down. I'll come back after a while to see how he is, or I'll stay if you need me."

"Omar," she said to him, as he whined to her, when she came out, "we've got to go and tell his father that we nearly killed him. We must expiate, if we can."

She walked to the station, engaged a cab, and paced the platform until the train came. Richard often said later that his heart clamped tight at the sight of her tragic white face, as she came toward him. They started toward the Lodge and she told him the story very simply, as she had told it to Anne, with no expressed lamenta-

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tions, but she spared herself not one whit of the responsibility.

When they reached the house, she offered some excuse for not going in, and made for the woods. For hours she almost ran, like a fleeing Mænad, the dog at her heels; and once or twice she said to him, "We might have killed him! We might have killed him!"

Omar could not understand, no one could understand, that to her own inner self, when she pushed Bobby away from her, there in her house, she had pushed him over the cliff with her own two hands!

When she finally went back to the Lodge after her hours of scourging, she found the Judge in the living-room. He started at the change in her. She had not broken fast since early morning, and she was white, haggard, and pitiful.

"My child!" he said, in concern, as she came in.

"Is he better? How is he now?"

"Sleeping quietly. The doctor has been here again, and the reports are most encouraging.

The tears began to trickle down her cheeks and

she shook. The Judge put her in a big chair, got her a glass of sherry, and insisted on her taking it.

"He might have been killed there, before my eyes. I should have been responsible for his death," she whispered to him.

Judge Carteret spoke sternly, in a voice of authority.

"Cecilia Carné, don't let me hear you speak so again. You have no right to blame yourself for what was the purest accident. That is morbid and weak. The child has been exposed to this same danger ever since we came out here. It was only mischance that it happened near your house to-day, instead of to-morrow near my house. The thing to be thought of now is to get him well."

Richard and Anne came downstairs at this point, and Anne came to Cecilia and put her arm about her.

"He is sleeping normally, and it is going to be all right."

"I am glad," the girl answered.

"I was too excited to half thank you for com-

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ing to the station after me, Miss Carné, but I know now what a shock you saved me from, and I appreciate it."

"It was nothing. I could do so little."

"She did everything," Anne objected. "We couldn't have gotten through it without her at all. I was almost hysterical when she took me in hand."

"I'm afraid I was rough, but we had to work fast until the doctor came, and I thought you were going to fail us."

"She is going off to dinner with me, and be looked after, now," said the Judge. "We'll come back later to see how things are, and if we can do anything, ring up the house, Richard."

"Thanks, I think we'll get along all right now. The nurse will be here shortly."

As the Judge led Cecilia away, Anne said to Richard, "That is the strangest creature. When she came struggling in with Bobby to-day, I can't tell you how she looked. I don't know what I said to her, but something terrible. I knew she didn't like him, and I was beside myself with fright. She didn't even defend herself, she just kept telling me that he was n't

dead. She even carried him into the house, I was so weak."

"Poor Anne!"

"She and Bridget did everything. I thought he was dead, and that it was God's judgment on me for all the years I had neglected him. I just sat in the corner and cried. Miss Carné came and shook me. 'Be quiet; go and get some bandages and hot water,' she ordered me, and I went. If it had n't been for her, I 'd have failed Bobby even then."

Richard put his arms about her, and she clung to him.

"My poor Anne! We will not talk about your failing people; I know better than that."

He kissed her tenderly, and they went upstairs again to their boy. Mrs. O'Brien was sitting beside him until the nurse should come from the city.

"Has that gyurl gone?" she asked.

"Miss Carné? Yes, the Judge took her off to dinner."

"I want to ask her to ixcuse me fer the things I said about her. If it was n't fer her, we 'd not be havin' our bye to-night mayhap, fer she was

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the wan to think av ivrything to do fer him till the docthor came."

"She understands how excited we were, Bridget, and she does n't blame us at all. We must make her feel that we need her help to take care of him."

"'T was mesilf that saw thim playin' together loike childer, in her house, this marnin', an' 't was the divil in me that made me hould thim black thoughts against her."

"How did Bobby happen to be over there?"

"Sure, he wint to call, because she asked him to come. An' he goes widout mintioning it to annybody."

She went on to describe the scene at Cecilia's cottage, that preceded the accident; and as she finished, Bobby opened his eyes and smiled at them.

"Is this home?" he asked.

Anne knelt down beside him and covered his face and hands with kisses.

"Yes, Precious, this is home, and mudder and daddy and Bidgie."

"Mudder, your eyes are shiny, like cwying."

"My blessed baby!" she said, chokingly.

B o b b y

"I fell down an' hurted me, but de 'Fwaid lady got me, an' kissed me."

"You were playing Jack the Giant Killer, were you? Trying to jump down the vine in one jump?" Richard said.

"I was frowing sticks for Omar. Is he hurted too?"

"Not a bit. Off to bye-lo now, sir, and we 'll hear your adventures to-morrow, Jack the Giant Jumper."

They kissed him good-night, and he went to sleep, as he was bidden to do. Anne and Richard, hand in hand, sat beside him until the nurse came.

CHAPTER XIII

CECILIA RECEIVES A COMMISSION

THE next few days were anxious ones for the little colony that clustered about Hillcrest. They only thought for Bobby, and about Bobby, and they grew very close together in their common anxiety. But as the days grew into weeks, sturdy Mother Nature went quietly about her healing, and the strain relaxed, and the reaction set in.

Richard and Anne and even the Judge showed the effect of the ordeal, but Cecilia, she of the fine-spun, perishable tissue, allowed herself no let-down. At the end of two weeks they dismissed the nurse, and took turns in caring for their patient. Cecilia often came for the first half of the night, Anne would relieve her until dawn, and then Mrs. O'Brien would take charge. Richard came in for his turn in the afternoon, and the Judge usually sat with the boy while the Barretts had their dinner.

Cecilia Receives a Commission

These days of emotional strain were hard on Cecilia, and yet she found this breaking up of her being a sort of bitter-sweet experience. She had crept into her hiding-place, like a wounded creature, to steel herself against life; she had felt so secure in her slowly raised fortifications, and then this boy, with one push of his chubby fist, had tumbled the whole structure about her feet.

She was both glad and sorry. This world that she found herself in now, this comfortable, charming world of the Barretts and the Judge, was an entirely novel one to her. Her lot had always fallen among the radicals, the malcontents, the miserable. She had conceived the whole world so, at least all of the world that counted. She knew that there were rich, ignorant, luxurious folk against whom her fellows raged and railed, but they were unimportant, simply "the enemy," since there must needs be an enemy. They were the unthinking half-gods, that must go.

She had been lifted out of such an atmosphere and dropped down among these finely bred and interesting people, who were like

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creatures from Mars to her. Her first resentment of their invasion of her domain had given way to a secret gratitude to them for coming. She was deeply impressed by Anne Barrett's gentle sweetness, Richard's frank boyishness, and the Judge's mellow toleration of human kind. She discovered in him a man too big for petty prejudices and snapshot judgments. He looked at each question that came to him from every point of view, and with understanding. Certainly these could not be "the enemy" her erstwhile companions preached against. In all the circle of socialists and reformers with whom she had cast in her lot mentally, she could think of no one with the fair open-mindedness of Judge Carteret. Her mind, as well as her heart, was being stirred to new depths during these summer months.

As Bobby began to convalesce, Cecilia developed new and unsuspected talents for his amusement; he demanded the 'Fraid lady on all occasions, and she never failed him. She invented new games and stories to his heart's delight. Her masterpiece was a tiny theatre, constructed of a soap box, with pasteboard

Cecilia Receives a Commission

scenery, and a whole cast of painted pasteboard actors for a Peter Pan play. This exciting drama was played continuously like a Chinese performance, with new complications for each day, until the actors were literally worn out.

One night, just at dusk, she came toward the Lodge, to find Richard and Anne in the garden. Anne's laugh rang out — she was such a happy Anne these days.

"Miss Carné, is n't this the funniest hodge-podge of a garden you ever saw?" she laughed.

Cecilia stopped and inspected the riot of unassorted vegetation with her usual seriousness.

"It is a trifle polyglot," she admitted. "Just what were you trying to do, when you planted it?" she asked Richard, who was pursuing slugs.

"I never owned up to it before, but to tell the truth, this is a sort of vegetarian joke. The day I made this garden, Anne sorted out the seeds for me, in piles on the wheelbarrow, carefully tagged. Bobby and Omar upset the wheelbarrow, likewise the seeds, and Nature and I did the rest."

"You just dumped them all in, without regard to what they were?" Anne inquired.

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"Not at all. I put what I considered seeds of the same family, in the same neighborhood, but not being a seed specialist all seeds looked alike to me, and I evidently made some grave mistakes."

"And the funny part is, he likes this garden much better than the other two, and they turned out quite well," said Anne.

"I leave it to you, Miss Carné, if there are many gentleman farmers like myself, who can step into the garden and find in one row of vegetables, one squash, one cucumber, one pumpkin, and one head of lettuce."

Cecilia and Anne both laughed.

"It's like the Judge's library, delightfully democratic," said Anne.

"How are your early peas doing?" Cecilia inquired.

"Excellently. We had some for dinner to-night. Very superior, eh, Anne?"

"Very — what there was of them."

"I figure that they cost me about eighty cents a quart, while in the open market you can buy them for thirty-five; however, I consider that the work I put in on them makes the difference."

Cecilia Receives a Commission

"Mrs. O'Brien with Bobby?" Cecilia asked.

"Yes, but he's demanding the 'Fraid lady."

"I'll go up, and get him to sleep," Cecilia said.

"How she has changed!" Anne said, looking after her.

"How we have all changed," her husband echoed, facing her across his fantastic garden. "How lovely you are, Nan, in this half light, like a tall white lily, among my vegetables!" he said softly.

"Why, Richard!" she protested, blushing.

He came around and stood beside her. "Do you know what has happened to me, Anne Barrett?"

"Happened to you?"

"I have fallen in love, for the first time in my life."

"Richard, you!" She looked at him anxiously.

"It's the truth. I've fallen in love with the finest woman on this green earth, and the best part of it is she is my wife."

He put his arms about her, and leaned his cheek against her hair.

"I give thanks every day, Nan, for the shock

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that threw me out of my gilt cage, into the world of work, where manhood is the only asset that counts, and success for the one woman is the only goal worth reaching."

"Richard, I've been so proud of you, dear!" she whispered.

"I want more than that, Anne, I want your love, and I'll work for it, and wait for it —"

She put her hand across his mouth.

"Do I have to tell you? Don't you know? Have n't you guessed, Richard, my husband?"

Her arms were about his neck, and he felt her trembling.

"Think what I might have missed!" he said.
"Look, dear heart."

He pointed toward the lady moon, that sent her shaft toward them, as she mounted her high throne in the skies. They watched in silence her slow ascent.

"Let's call her our honeymoon," Anne said.

Richard's answer was a silent one.

"I'm the happiest man in the world to-night."

"And I'm the happiest woman."

"Shall we go over and see the Judge for a minute? He's worried over this case of his,



“I am the happiest man in the world to-night”

Cecilia Receives a Commission

and tired to death. I'd like to lend a hand to every fellow that needs it to-night," Richard said.

"That is the mission of happiness, dearest," Anne answered as they went toward the big house.

Meanwhile Cecilia found Bobby restless and wakeful. She told story after story, and each time when she thought he was safely off, he opened his eyes and said, "Tan't do sleep."

"What do you suppose is the matter with the Sleep Fairy? Maybe she's been caught by the wicked ogre Lie-awake."

"Tell me 'bout wicked ogie."

"Well, of course, you know that the Sleep Fairy rules over the Land of Slumber. It is a very beautiful country, with the highest mountains for people to fall off, the widest rivers for people to swim across, the broadest prairies for people to fly over; for of course that is the way people do in Slumberland. They keep falling off mountains and picking themselves up and doing it all over again, and swimming rivers with elastic banks, and skimming over plains, so their feet don't touch, yet they can't stop doing it."

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“Why do dey do dat?”

“Because Slumberland is under the curse of the wicked ogre, Lie-awake, and his black slave Nightmare. About a million years ago, when Night and Day were dividing up their kingdoms, Day thought that because there was so very much to do in this world, she ought to have the largest kingdom, but Night would not give in, so finally they had to take the same sized kingdoms and pretend they were satisfied; but they were not at all.

“Day was always making war on Night. In the summer-time she got the better of him, but in the winter Night captured a good slice off each end of her domain. So at last, Day made a compact with the ogre Lie-awake and got him to put his curse on the Night’s kingdom of Slumberland.

“Now after the ogre put his curse on it, people began to do these strange falling, flying, swimming things. The ogre sent hateful little Nixey into the lovely Garden of Dreams —”

“Where is de Darden of Dreams?”

“In Slumberland. It is the garden the Sleep Fairy planted. There were happy dreams

Cecilia Receives a Commission

growing there, and lucky dreams, and beautiful dreams; and every night the Sleep Fairy and her sisters picked the dreams and flew away with them to give to all the people in the world."

"To me, too?"

"Of course."

"An' mudder an' daddy an' de Judge?"

"Yes. Oh, yes."

"An' Omar?"

"Especially to Omar. He just groans with pleasure over his. But as I was going to say, the horrid little Nixey's planted some more seeds in the garden, and a whole crop of bad dreams came up. There were ugly dreams and frightful dreams and creepy dreams, and the Nixey's picked them every night and flew away with them to give to the people —"

"To bad peoples?"

"No, that was the trouble. If they had only given them to bad people, that might have made the bad people sorry, but sometimes they give them to good people who eat mince-pie o' night."

"I don't do dat."

"Of course not. Now there is a way to get the Sleep Fairy to give you a good dream. You lie

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on your back, and fold your hands, so, and shut your eyes, and say over and over —

“Sleep Fairy, riding on a moonbeam,
Come and bring Bobby a beautiful dream.”

Bobby composed himself according to directions, and repeated the jingle over and over. Then he popped his eyes open.

“She won’t tome.”

“You have to keep saying it a long, long time, because she is so far away.”

Again and again they repeated the lines together, until Bobby’s breath came evenly, and Cecilia knew that the Sleep Fairy had heard and answered.

She sat there beside his bed, wrapped in a sort of peaceful calm. The moonlight flooded the room so brightly that she put out the night light. Outside there was the intermittent silence of the summer night, interrupted by the sudden whirr of crickets, the deep-throated croak of a frog, the distant barking of a dog. She sat relaxed, at rest, and all the subtle forces, the occult alchemy of the night, were at work in the soul of her.

Cecilia Receives a Commission

Presently she felt, rather than saw, a presence, and turned to the Judge, in the doorway.

"Asleep?" he whispered.

"No, but you should be," she answered, tip-toeing to him.

"I came to get you. Are you ready to go, now?"

"Yes, he's sleeping quietly."

She went to lean over Bobby, covered him gently, and felt of his head and hands. The Judge watched her wonderingly. She seemed so sweet, so womanly, like the white-browed saint whose name she bore, this new Cecilia. She turned to him and followed downstairs and out into the garden, where Richard and Anne were sitting waiting for them.

"The Judge would go for you himself," Anne smiled. "How is our boy?"

"You can go to bed to-night, he will not need you."

"You're a dear," Anne said. "I'm sorry you have missed this wonderful night."

"I have not missed it," smiled Cecilia gently. "Good-night."

"Good-night, good Samaritan," Richard said

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to her; and she and the Judge took their departure.

"It is a wonderful night," the Judge said as they entered the wood, silvered with beams of moonlight. "Even this bit of woods looks strange, unreal."

"It is full of ghostly visitants!" breathed Cecilia.

"Where are they? Point them out, and ask them to speak with us, to explain the eternal mysteries!"

"I speak with them?"

"Yes, you seem to me two-thirds wayward spirit, and only one-third woman."

Cecilia smiled enigmatically and pointed straight ahead of them.

"There, in the midst of the enchanted forest, is the Spirit of Man, the Seeker. See the two shadowy hosts to right and left of him. They are the armies of the Senses and the Soul. They drag him hither and thither in search of fulfilment."

The Judge nodded, in silence, watching her.

"See over there, those skulking shades, Hate,

Cecilia Receives a Commission

Lust, and all the ruthless demons of unrest!
The call of the Senses is eternal."

Of a truth the Judge saw them where she pointed.

"Over there, see, by the birch tree, Purity, Truth, and Charity, with all their hosts. Hear them sing to the Soul. There you have the whole picture, with Life as the forest."

"You have forgotten the great white central figure," prompted the Judge, in his turn pointing.

"I do not see it."

"It is there, above your Spirit of Man. Can't you see it? One hand out to the host of the Senses, and one to the hosts of the Soul; and see how they grope toward one another, as if they would clasp hands."

"What is the name of your figure?"

"Love. Love, the lover; Love, the father; Love, the healer, the wife, the mother. Can't you see him, standing there in all his majesty?"

"I only just begin to see him, dimly," Cecilia answered him, and they went on in silence to her door.

The Girl Who Lived in the Woods

"I had something to say to you to-night, but our thoughts have wandered a long way from the course I had charted for them."

"Sit down a moment and we'll call them back."

They sat on the doorstep in the moonlight, and the Judge spoke.

"I had this idea in my mind before Bobby was hurt, but we have all been so busy with the boy that I have had no chance to talk it over with you. Now that he is on the way to health, God bless him, I want to ask this thing of you."

"You could ask nothing of me, that I would not give you, Judge Carteret."

"My dear friend, what a generous soul you are! You said once that you loved that big room of mine, the library. I want you to make it perfect, as you have made this room of yours. Will you do my walls for me, in some such fashion?"

Cecilia faced him, her eyes shining.

"You want me to do that room? You'll let me? Oh, Judge Carteret!" she exclaimed.

"One moment. You do this thing for me, little friend, and all the paltry return I can make

Cecilia Receives a Commission

you will be to deposit a certain number of round gold dollars to your account in the bank. But some day they may be the means of getting something, some pleasure that would not have come to you otherwise, and then perhaps you'll say, 'This is the frieze the Judge has made for me.' "

Cecilia listened, but when he finished she shook her head.

"I could n't take any money for it. It will be the greatest joy of my life; but never speak again of paying me, please."

"I did not speak of paying you. That would be impossible. You cannot 'pay' for such things with money, any more than you can pay for love with gratitude; they are different coin."

Cecilia was not listening.

"I shall be distracted until I find my theme. What do you want there, forever on your walls? What shall I put there, to mean you, and me, for all time? We must make no mistakes."

"I leave it to you. There will be no mistakes."

He watched her curiously. Was this flushed, shining-eyed creature, tossing her fretted head,

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like a two-year-old waiting to leap into the race-course — was this the Saint Cecilia of Bobby's bedside? All at once she startled him.

"I know — I have it! It shall be the enchanted forest as we saw it to-night, with its groping shades and your Love-figure as the centre. I do not see him clearly yet, but as the thing grows in me, as I grow, it will come. What does he look like to you, Judge Peter?"

"He looks like the Christ, I think, child."

"That's it! Love, with all the elements, human and divine. I'll begin *now*; I'll get my things and begin to block it out."

She jumped up, but he caught her hand.

"No, no! It's nearly midnight. You must go to bed now. To-morrow is time enough. Why, you have all the rest of your life to finish it in."

"Sleep?" she scorned him. "You can sleep when you have no thoughts, but sleep will never come my way, while this demon of work is on my shoulders."

"Have it your own way; only if you make yourself sick over it, I'll withdraw the commission."

Cecilia Receives a Commission

“But you can’t withdraw the idea, the inspiration; that is here!” She tapped her forehead. “It’s true, it’s alive, it must take shape and come into the world of things that are!”

“You eerie child, you look like a seeress of old, finger on lip!”

She lifted her arm and spoke half mockingly, half earnestly.

“The seeress speaks: O Mortal, I prophesy that out of this night shall come great joy!”

CHAPTER XIV

CECILIA MAKES A SPECIAL PLEA

ONE night some weeks after Bobby's accident, the Barretts went over to the big house to sit with the Judge for a while, on his veranda. Since Bobby's convalescence the little colony had formed the habit of spending part of every evening together. The Judge was enjoying a cigar with a crony of his, the Reverend Dr. Stokey, the Episcopalian clergyman of the village, a pompous, fat little man, of great affability. He and the Judge often played golf together; and when some of his friends quizzed the Judge about his partner, he retorted that it was an interesting experiment to see just how long professional religion held out, and he added, it went as far as the sixth hole, where he accused the Dominie of a discreet "damn." The Dominie assured him that he had said "Damaged," and referred to what he had done to the green.

Cecilia Makes a Special Plea

At any rate they seemed to find some mutual enjoyment in one another's society, and on this occasion the Barretts came in for the end of a discussion of High Church service.

"It is an age of dramatics," the clergyman was saying. "The theatre is the great amusement of the people. Our books, our music, our newspapers, they all emphasize the dramatic quality of life. So it is in religion: people like the pomp of the High Church service — the thrill of color and music and incense."

"Are you sure the people distinguish between the dramatic and the theatrical?" the Judge queried. "Service is an act that serves, is it not? What end does this bowing and bending of the knee serve? Can it be really pleasing to Almighty God to see his creatures at these antics, or is it merely gratifying to this dramatic sense, as you call it, of the creatures themselves?"

"Religion must appeal to the emotional side of man, Judge; and I believe that any means that help to a religious quickening are justified."

"You think religion cannot be brought to a basis of reason?"

"Certainly not. Reason kills feeling. You

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cannot analyze the instinct of worship, any more than you can a lark's song."

"That is true," Anne said. "It always seems to me a beautiful thing that the instinct of worship is in us all, whether we stifle it or give it room to grow."

"Well, my only grievance against the religion of the churches is the tendency of ministers and strict church folk to belittle the needs of the body and insist upon the paramount needs of the soul. My work and the Dominie's work should lie in the same field, dovetail together, as it were. Surely the service that counts is to the people about us."

"You mean religion is not practical enough?" Richard asked him.

"I mean that religion must admit that the body is exactly as important as the soul, that this life is just as vital and important as the life to come. When I have such a case as I heard to-day, for instance, such as I have nearly every day, the Dominie should be there to help me."

Cecilia stole in among them, nodded, and sat down on the steps at the Judge's feet, motioning him not to move.

Cecilia Makes a Special Plea

“What was the case?” Anne asked him.

“It was the case of a girl, eighteen years old, who had been trying to support a younger brother, crippled months ago in a mill. The girl’s wages at a State Street store, one of our biggest dry-goods stores, amounted to seven dollars a week. When she protested to the man who hired her, that she and the boy could not live on such a wage, he shrugged his shoulders, and told her with an insolent stare, that the company did not expect the girls to live on their salaries. This girl, like thousands of others, made a brave fight and was beaten, conquered by terror of starvation for both of them, and so she went into the streets —”

“Oh, Judge Carteret!” protested Anne.

“To-day she was brought before me on a charge of vagrancy. I wish some of the good, untempted people of this city, who think that ‘service’ consists of bobbing the head at the altar, and chanting the Magnificat on Sundays, might have been there to hear the story that girl poured out to me. She needs money and a chance for a new start. I could give her that, but her real want was a spiritual one. What do you suppose

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that girl's thoughts were about the All-wise God who rules the universe? There should have been some wise, understanding man of God there, to warm and feed that weak starving spirit. Religion is too much for the Church, the sanctuary."

"What did you do with that girl?" Cecilia asked.

"I sent her to a woman friend of mine, who does more to start disheartened girls on the right road than all the charitable institutions in the city."

"But surely you must admit, Judge, that the Church does more and more every year toward taking religion to the poor and the criminal."

"That girl was not a criminal, Dominie. It is our modern condition that makes it possible for that great State Street store to do business, based on the prostitution of its employees, that is the criminal part of it. The head of that store is a prominent churchman, a lavish contributor to church charities; but he is the only criminal in this case, to my thinking."

"I know him, he is a good man. No doubt he is ignorant of these things," protested Dr. Stokey.

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"What right has he to be ignorant of a condition he is directly responsible for?" demanded Cecilia. "That is a stupid evasion of the question."

Dr. Stokey blinked in wounded astonishment, and Anne tried to cover the breach.

"I suppose every day unfolds a new drama before you, Judge Carteret."

"The strange part of it is, that year after year the thing repeats itself, like a cyclorama. The great procession passes me, into prisons, out into the world to sin again; and greed, lust, and covetousness form the background for every tragedy."

"I should think you would go mad with the horror of it," Cecilia shuddered.

"I should get discouraged, I suppose, if I did not take a look now and then at the whole organism. I say to myself, 'The body politic as a whole, is healthful; these are only the diseased parts that I am dealing with. In time we shall discover newer, better ways to heal and cure and make wholesome these sick parts.'"

"Along what lines, Judge?" the clergyman asked.

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"The criminal is diseased, just as the hunchback is; and I believe we have no more right to punish him, than we have to punish the hunchback. One is no more responsible than the other."

"But that upsets our entire penal code, does n't it?" Richard said.

"Certainly. It should be upset. It is barbaric. When crime is regarded as disease of the same rank as consumption or cancer, or any other abnormality, then the brains of this country will work out some intelligent treatment of it."

"But what are we to do in the meantime? Let the criminals go free?"

"In the meantime we must try palliatives, like industrial education, revised penal laws, and possibly, enlightened religion."

"And socialism," said Cecilia.

"You believe that to be a panacea? I steer clear of 'isms' for my part."

"Until you restrict power and wealth and get an equal chance for all, you never can have any lasting improvement," she answered warmly.

"And that time will never come, as long as

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men are born with unequal ability and brain power," remarked Richard.

The Dominie took up the cudgel.

"My dear young lady, it is anarchy and socialism and trades-unionism and such terrible things, that fill our papers with reports of violence and murder. Like the case before the Judge now, with this terrible Conrad, and this crazy editor, who killed Parker because he would n't join their Union, or something like that."

" 'Something like that'—anarchy and socialism in one breath—there you have it! It is the stupidity of people who get such idiotic impressions as that, that holds the whole world back," she cried.

"Don't be too hard on him," the Judge protested, glancing at the Dominie, who looked as if contemplating flight.

"What right has a man to express an opinion on the subject, who can't distinguish between socialism and anarchy, and who thinks Conrad shot Parker because he would n't join a Union?"

"Am I misinformed in the matter?" inquired the Reverend Doctor anxiously. "I disapprove

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so of the sensationalism of the daily press, that I may not have gotten the story straight."

"You have no right to an opinion about it, until you have gotten it straight," Cecilia flung at him. "It was Conrad's fate to have to remove Parker, but he did it from the highest principles."

"But Cecilia," said Anne, "it was murder."

"Murder? It is the motive that makes the taking of life murder, is n't it, Judge Carteret? If the motive is a great one, it is not murder."

"I'm afraid that is a specious but unsound argument, my young friend," smiled the Judge.

"If the working-man seizes the right to get the fruits of his own labor, that is crime; but if the employer squeezes the very life-blood out of him, that is business."

"You let your own personal passion bias your judgment, Cecilia," Richard objected.

"You can't go on being unimpassioned if you live in it, if you see the other side, as I have done. The only way the laboring-man can survive to-day is through the Union; that is his club to hold over the employer."

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"As the employer's wealth is a club to hold over the employee."

"Exactly. Before the Union, the poor man was a slave; now he can hold up his head and strike back."

"Until he has brains enough not to use the club for murder, he has no right to use it," said Richard hotly.

"How about the capitalist and his club? Is n't his method murder?"

"But Parker is dead, Miss Carné. Who is guilty of his murder?" the clergyman ventured.

"The Steel Trust is guilty of his death."

"How do you make that out? He was part of the trust; he represented them. How are they guilty?" Richard challenged.

"He was the instrument of their greed. Whatever Parker himself thought about the right or wrong of Open Shop principles, the trust only decided on Open Shop because it gave them more money and more power. You don't suppose the trust cares anything about the principle of the thing, do you?"

"What does your Union care about the prin-

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ciple, if it comes to that? Coöperation gives the men more power and more money. It's six of one and half a dozen of the other. What we all want is more of everything — more money, more power, more freedom; and we all fight the next man for what we think is our share," said Richard.

"That is all socialism wants for the working-man — his share. A chance to get that share by the sweat of his own body and the labor of his own hands."

"You think it must be war, then, Cecilia. Is n't there any way to arbitrate between them?"

"The capitalist preaches arbitration and harmony just as long as the working-man stands by and lets him run what should be their common business. But when the man who does the actual work interferes with Mr. Capitalist's plans, he has the militia called out, and the working-man gets his head broken for disturbing the peace!"

"I fear you are prejudiced, Miss Carné," Dr. Stokey remarked suavely.

"It is n't fair to talk of these things all the evening, when the poor Judge has it all day," Anne interrupted.

Cecilia Makes a Special Plea

Cecilia glanced at the Judge, and rose.

"Forgive me, I've been stupid."

He took her hand and smiled in his calm way.

"There is nothing to forgive. Each of us is born into an environment that builds for us a structure called convictions, and every day of experience adds to or subtracts from, strengthens or weakens, our stronghold. I work at mine, the Dominie at his, Richard, and Anne, and you, we all work according to the light within and about us, and we must be patient with each other that our buildings are so diverse."

"Dr. Stokey, I apologize," said Cecilia quickly.

"My dear young lady, I accept your apology," he said grandiosely.

Cecilia frowned. "Now, you apologize to me," she remarked.

"I — but why?"

"You offended me just as much as I offended you."

"Dear me! Well, of course, then, I apologize if you feel that way; I do indeed."

"I accept your apology," she replied, and turned to the others appealingly. "I suppose I am too passionate about it all, but you don't

know, any of you, what bricks and straws have gone into my building. You build in orderly ways, according to some one style of architecture, but I am working at a structure like Kremlin, patched with such myriad influences. I know many girls like the one in Judge Carteret's court to-day; I know great ambitions that are being killed for lack of a chance; I know great lives that are cramped and hideous for lack of decencies that every human creature is entitled to; I know children born in want and doomed at birth to death and worse; I know men fighting like tigers for food and a roof for those they love; and I so want to help them all, to get them a chance. I want socialism, or anarchy, or anything that will help, because I come of them, the People, the great struggling, suffering, groaning, laughing multitude, fighting for so little before they are crowded on into the Gulf."

With a sob she turned and left them dumb and lashed with her words. She ran into the woods like a voice retreating into the wilderness. Anne spoke first.

Cecilia Makes a Special Plea

"How terrible she was! Like an angel with a flaming sword!"

"She is the stuff that makes a Christian martyr. Her frail shoulders are too slight to carry the burden that she longs to lift. Her heart is too big for her girl's body; you feel as if it must break its cerement of flesh and fill the universe with its divine pity," the Judge said softly.

"H'm! She is a most upsetting young woman!" declared the Dominie, rising to take his departure.

CHAPTER XV

ENTER SAXTON GRAVES

CECILIA had been at work for a couple of weeks on the murals for the Carteret library. The big empty room at the top of the house, originally designed for a ballroom, had been made into a studio and turned over to her. She could be found there working like a demon, at all sorts of odd hours. The windows looked out over the waters, and the sun streamed in hotly, through the big skylight, but Cecilia was totally unconscious of her surroundings, so absorbed was she in her work. The Judge protested against her long hours, so finally she promised him to work only in the cool of the morning and the late afternoon.

On this particular morning, she had slipped up to the housetop about five o'clock, before any one was stirring. She had had a restless night, in which a new phase of her work had presented

Enter Saxton Graves

itself. She had not stopped for any food; she just rushed at work with her usual abandon. For three hours and a half she painted rapidly, brilliantly, and then all at once Nature asserted herself, and the inspiration seemed to go. Cecilia sank down before the canvas despairingly.

Some one mounted the stairs, and the Judge's head appeared over the top of the banister.

"I thought I heard a mouse in my garret," he smiled.

"I was mad with joy over an idea that came in the night, and now I can't do it — the thing is all gone. I'm a failure, a miserable failure."

"Cecilia Carné, have you had any breakfast?" he demanded sternly.

"No, no, there was no time for it," impatiently.

The Judge went over and drew her to her feet.

"You need a guardian," he said, "you are n't fit to be left to your own base devices. Don't you think this body of yours has any rights? A woman with your sense of fairness, too! I'm ashamed of you."

He led her downstairs to the breakfast-room

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and saw that she was served, and thoroughly enjoyed her ravenous appetite. She caught his smile and returned it.

“What a fool you must think me.”

“Well, you are not what I would call a sensible person. I am of the opinion, however, that that very lack is half of your charm.”

She leaned toward him impulsively. “Do you think I have charm?”

“I should say that you were endowed with a liberal amount.”

“I never thought of such a thing, but I’m awfully glad you think I have it,” she added, naively.

“I am not alone in that opinion, it is shared by the Barretts, Bobby, Saxton Graves —”

“Oh, him!” scornfully.

“You don’t like him?”

“No, he annoys me.”

“How?”

“I don’t know; his just being himself annoys me.”

The Judge laughed. “Trifle intangible, is n’t it? Could n’t call it a direct charge to come before the court.”

“Arraign him as *homo*, public nuisance to woman.”

“Ah, ha! it is his sex you object to. Scarcely his fault. Do you remember what Locke puts into the mouth of Sir Marcus Ordeyne? ‘Sex is the fundamental blunder of the Universe!’ Your charge should be made against a higher power, young lady.”

“No doubt; he buzzes so.”

“Buzzes?” The Judge threw back his head and laughed heartily. “Poor Saxton, I am sorry he bothers you, for he is to be my guest for a couple of weeks.”

“Really? He is coming here?”

“He is here, came last night. You are sitting in his place.”

“It’s a shame!” she cried hotly. “Just as I was getting on so well!”

“But what difference can he make to you?”

“He will — you’ll see — he’ll make a difference in everything.”

“You would n’t have me turn him out of the house, would you? He was pathetically grateful for my invitation.”

Cecilia rose.

"He shall not come into the studio — he shall not put his foot across the threshold."

"You are ruler of that realm. Maybe I've been bold myself, rushing in without permission. I never thought —"

"Oh, you!"

There was so much of reproach and tenderness in the exclamation, that the Judge took her face between his hands, and smiled down into her eyes.

"Don't be too hard on poor Saxton, dear. You ought to see more of young people, we are all too old and staid for you. I fancied Saxton had a special reason for wanting to come to Hillcrest. He's a fine young fellow for all his chaff, and a stanch friend of mine."

"I'll try to be decent to him because you like him."

"Nonsense! Be nice to him because he's a fine, good-looking young chap, and like him for his own sake. Here he comes now," he added, as Saxton started down the stairs singing.

Without any answer Cecilia ran into the kitchen and up the back stairs to her workshop,

leaving the Judge to gaze after her in amazement.

"Young women of to-day require great subtlety of treatment," he mused, half aloud. "The old method of a blow on the head with a war club, and the barter system, so simple and so efficacious — alas, they are gone for aye."

"God's in his heav'n:

All's right with the world!"

sang Saxton, as he came in.

"Addressing a jury, Judge?"

"No, indulging in a lamentable habit of audible contemplation."

"What is your theme?"

"The present-day methods of courtship, as practised by the civilized whites."

"Lord! at this hour? What suggested this frivolity?"

"Miss Cecilia Carné."

Saxton dropped his spoon, and then remarked with elaborate carelessness, "Miss Carné? Is she still about?"

"Quite so. I may say she has become the vital centre, and the rest of us are about."

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"Indeed? You see her often?"

"Very. She has just had breakfast with me."

"What! — here? — this morning? I say, you might have let me know."

"I'd no idea she was coming. She paints upstairs, and I found her up there — had been working for hours on an empty stomach, — and I dragged her down to breakfast. I did not think you would be interested in her being here," he added slyly.

"I suppose she does n't know I'm here."

"I broke it to her this morning."

"Did she take it hard?"

"To be frank, she did not seem enraptured. She has an idea that your frivolous presence will interfere with serious work."

"She thinks I'm a clown," said Graves ruefully.

"She objects to young men in general, she informs me."

"Sign she's never known any nice ones."

The Judge shouted.

"Youth, youth! you blessed egotist!"

"I don't care what she thinks of young men

Enter Saxton Graves

in toto, if she can be induced to think well of one young man *solo!*"

Judge Carteret looked at him, serious at once.

"You are in earnest, Saxton?"

"Certainly. As far as I know her, she is the most attractive woman I have ever met."

The Judge mused a moment before he spoke.

"Well, and why not? Why should n't she come to care for you, with your spirits, and your youth? You have my best wishes, boy. But take a word from an ancient and observing sportsman. You 'll never catch this silver shiner with net nor luminous bait. You will have to dive into the quiet pools, where she hides, follow swift through muddy waters, where she glides, and catch her with your own two hands. Watch out, or she 'll slip between your fingers!"

"Thank you, Judge, I 'll remember."

"I 'm off. I 'm to pick Richard up at the Lodge. I had thought I might come out early to-day to see how — to play a round of golf," adding, mentally, "to see how Cecilia is getting on." Aloud he said, "If you care to play, we 'll go over about four."

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He waved an adieu, took his hat and went out onto the sunny veranda; but for some reason he shivered.

"I'm getting old, I'm afraid," he sighed, as he stepped into the runabout. This time he did not look up at the studio windows as he drove away.

Saxton finished a very good breakfast, and wandered out on the veranda to smoke a cigarette. Presently Bobby, the erstwhile hero of a fall, came into view, laboriously moving on all fours. He climbed the steps, still impersonating a quadruped, sat down on the top step, and addressed Saxton, as if he were just the person he had expected to see.

"Where is she?"

"Good-morning, Bobby; I hope I see you well."

"Tan't you see me well? Where are your glasses, Mr. Man?"

"I referred to your health, sir. May I ask why you go on all fours?"

"I'm a turtle, an' I tame to see the 'Fwaid lady."

"I don't know any such person, but then I am

Enter Saxton Graves

a newcomer and not up on the inhabitants of these parts. You remember me, don't you?"

"Yes, your name is Gwavey."

"Not quite; Graves, to be exact, Saxton Graves, at your service."

"Don't you know de 'Fwaid lady?"

"No. Is she a witch?"

"No, she 's my lady. I play wif her. Do you want to do an' see her?"

"By all means. Do you think she would want to see me?"

"I don't know. You 're pwetty big. She likes lil ones, but I 'll ask her."

"Little ones? Little turtles, you mean?"

"No, lil boys."

"If you think she 'd like me better as a turtle, I can try that position, but it may take some practice, before I can move about easily. My girth is slightly excessive, you see, for going on all fours.

"Oh, to be a Turtle,
A slow, lethargic turtle!"

he chanted, leaning over and trying to touch the floor with his hands.

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"I don't fink you 'd look nice turtling," said the boy gravely. "You tan tome along an' I'll ask her if you tan tome in."

It dawned upon Saxton that Cecilia was the "she" in question, and he followed his leader only too willingly. Three or four stairs from the top, Bobby halted him, finger on lip, and went on up alone.

"Morning, 'Fwaid lady," he heard him say.

"Oh, Bobbits! How is the boy?" a fresh young voice answered.

"I'm dood. I would like to tome up an' tiss you."

Evidently she was out of reach.

"By all means, but very carefully; no more falls!"

Pleasant sounds floated down to the eaves-dropper and he peeped. Cecilia was working on a scaffolding reached by a ladder, on the top step of which stood Bobby. She was leaning down to kiss and pat him.

"I'm a turtle," he said.

"Are you? Dear me! I never cared for them much. Pretty color, but so stiff-backed."

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Saxton repressed a chuckle, and Bobby went on. "Do you like lizards better?"

"I have n't a pronounced taste for them either. If you must be a crawler, why not be a splendid big boa constrictor and eat lambs at a bite, and goats in two bites."

"Eat lil lambs?"

"Yes, the stupid woolly kind that people paint, and call 'In the Pasture,' or 'Homeward Bound.' "

This being a little out of Bobby's range, he changed the subject.

"Would you like a man I 've dot?"

"A man? What man?"

"Dust a man. I tol him 'bout you, an' he said he 'd be a turtle, too, if you liked dat."

"Bobby, who is he, and where is he?"

"He's Gwavey. He was on de porch, but I bwinged him up. He's sitting on de steps,— if you 'd let him tome in?"

"Oh, Bobby!"

"He feels more like a worm than a boa constrictor, but if you 'll let him come up and apologize, he may grow to the required length."

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"You!" said Cecilia, glancing at him coldly.

"Yes, dat 's him," Bobby explained, conscious that all was not well. "If you don't like him, Bobby take him away," he added obligingly.

"Take him along, then, I 'm busy."

Cecilia went on with her work.

"Have you ever considered the feelings of the lamb, just before the boa constrictor grabs him?" murmured Saxton.

"I 've no patience with lambs, silly, unoriginal creatures, always running after a leader."

"But we can't all be Cecilia Boa Constrictors."

She granted him a half-smile. "You flatter me. You conceive yourself to be the lamb!"

"Metaphorically. But I shall bleat and baa shockingly before I get swallowed."

"Do go away, you interrupt me."

"That is what I 've come out here to do."

"I won't permit it."

"Pardon me, you are not invited to permit it. I have come out to spend two weeks to demonstrate to you what an altogether nice thing a nice man can be, and what a dull world it is without them."

Enter Saxton Graves

"Humph!" scornfully.

"Gwavey, she don't like you. Tome on."

"It behooves us, Robert, as the only members of our sex present, not to run, but to stand her fire."

"It behooves you not to make yourself a nuisance," snapped Cecilia.

"We'll be very quiet if you'll let us hang around and watch you. We will worship quietly from below, and only speak in whispers."

Cecilia switched herself around and glared down at him.

"I'd have you understand that I am extremely busy, and that I have no time to bandy words. This is my sanctum, and nobody — nobody — intrudes upon me here without my express permission. If you want to bar me from the place by marching up here all the time, be good enough to say so, and I'll paint elsewhere while you are here."

"Bobby, the fire has become a cannonade," Saxton remarked. "Even the bravest soldier is not expected to face that unarmed. As turtles we came in, as turtles we'll back out!"

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With which he transferred Bobby from the ladder to his shoulders, and with a low bow he stamped off downstairs, leaving Cecilia with the uncomfortable feeling that somehow or other he had gotten the better of her.

CHAPTER XVI

CROSSROADS

ALL through the hot August days the trial of Conrad, Gridley, and Martin dragged along in Judge Carteret's court. The killing of Parker, and its bearing on the labor situation of the entire country, kept the case much in the public eye.

Crossroads was the site chosen by the huge allied interests which controlled the steel industries of the country, for the erection of its mammoth new steel foundries. The place might have figured in a modern Arabian Nights tale. One day a waste of sand and weeds, a year later a small modern city, paved, drained, electric-lighted, and steam-heated. Into this ready-made town swarmed some twenty-five thousand men and their families, settled themselves in the cottages built for them, and took up life as indifferently as if such marvels were of daily occurrence.

Crossroads

In the days of the sand waste, the steel corporation men had said, "We will build a modern city overnight; we will spend many millions of dollars if necessary, and it shall grow and prosper to our liking." Then these modern barons set the wheels to working. Great caution was used to keep the plans for the town secret until the proper time should come to make them public; but by some leak, or that psychologic something which flashes thought from one brain to another, the secret was known by that army with which the barons had to deal.

So it was that a year before the first shovel of sand was upturned at Crossroads, under an apparently peaceful surface a mighty struggle began. It was like the battle of primeval forces, in the bowels of the earth, before the eruption of the volcano. It was hinted that the Steel Trust would declare for Open Shop policy in this town of their creating; and what the trust willed came true, for they had the money to make the impossible happen.

On the other hand, all the organized force of labor felt that Crossroads was to be the battlefield on which the big fight was to be fought, a

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fight which would have vital results for both sides.

Slowly, during the constructive period at Crossroads, all the strength of the two armies was being concentrated and made ready. The probable policy of the Trust with regard to labor was discussed in every meeting of labor unions in the country. The labor leaders felt that it was to be the big test case of the Union's power.

The time came at last, when terms must be made between the generals of the opposing forces, and the strongest men in the Union were sent to handle the situation. Parker, the general manager for the steel interests, was known to be in favor of Open Shop, and his influence over his associates was a strong one. He was a good conservative man of marked strength and ability, as well as a man of most positive convictions. In looking over the field, a scout for the Union discovered that Orkeney, the assistant under Parker, and his right-hand man, was not in agreement with his chief; at least he seemed willing to oppose his policy and support the Union, if the perquisites were sizable enough. Orkeney was not a strong enough man to stand

out boldly against Parker, but he was seized upon by the Union, as the key to the situation.

He had agreed to go quietly to each of the important men of the Trust and point out the folly of Parker's idea. He worked cleverly and well, and succeeded in putting the men of the committee on their guard. The real outcome of his work was to be determined when the forces met.

The day of the conference with the labor leaders arrived and the various committees went into session in Parker's office at ten o'clock in the morning. At one, lunch was carried in to them, and dinner was served at seven. It was not until one o'clock in the morning that the men came out, flushed or haggard as the case might be, but all plainly worn out with the long struggle.

Parker stood by the table in the Directors' room after they had gone, his pale face lined with the day's strain, facing his assistant who stood opposite him.

"Well, Orkeney?"

Orkeney smiled with an attempt at jocularity. "The first gun is fired, Mr. Parker."

"Look here, Orkeney, are you with me, or are

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you not? There were moments to-day, when I felt that you were siding with the Union advocates. It seems as if some one had talked Union to the men on our committee. Surely you did n't do that, did you?"

"Certainly not. I can't think of anything I said that would make you think —"

"It was n't so much what you said, as what you thought."

"What I thought? Surely, Mr. Parker, you are n't setting up as a mind-reader?"

"No, but in a high state of excitement, like to-day's, you find yourself as subject to mental opposition, as to that which is spoken. If you have any doubts as to the wisdom of my position, for Heaven's sake say so now, and let us understand one another. It will be a fight to the death, and there must be perfect harmony between you and me, Orkeney."

"I do not question the wisdom of your course in the long run, Mr. Parker. I only feel that it is disastrous, from the point of view of business, now."

"You mean Gridley will call a strike, and cripple us?"

Crossroads

"You know yourself that we have a million dollars' worth of orders on our books, and that our skilled men are Union men."

"Yes, that is so. But once get this thing settled on a fair Open Shop policy, and we'll have no more strikes and hold-ups. We will give the men a fair deal and get the same from them."

"Well, there is one thing settled. We are tied up right now, for Goodness knows how long. Gridley will lock us out, all right."

"We will open Crossroads on the twenty-fourth, Open Shop, if we have to hire two armed men to protect every man we take on!" said Parker; and Orkeney knew it would be so. "We will settle this matter once and forever."

The days that followed between that historic conference and the opening of the town were busy ones. Parker enlisted non-Union men, and hired others to protect them. They were days of terrible strain for him, but he bore himself like a man consecrated to a big cause. And such he felt himself to be. He sincerely believed that a check upon the power of the labor union would benefit the whole labor world.

When those thousands of men he was to em-

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ploy assembled at Crossroads, and the foundries stood ready for the Titan hand of Commerce that was to fire them, Parker arranged a series of dedicatory exercises, in which he was conspicuous, scorning the precautions which his associates begged him to take. This was his mania, the inauguration of this town, and he was too absorbed to give a thought to his own personal safety.

The programme of the first day included dedicatory exercises in the big hall of the men's club-house, provided for them by the employers. The room was packed, and thanks to adequate policing, the meeting was an orderly one. Speeches were made by some of the foremen of the shops, and by the pastor of the Crossroads church; and Parker closed the meeting with an earnest address, setting forth his convictions in regard to the men employed by the Trust, and making clear his intention to see that the men had a fair deal. He made an appeal to them to see that the employers had equally fair treatment. He spoke of the fiery speeches of Gridley, one of the Union leaders, and of the editorials of Martin, editor of a Union paper,

inciting the Union men to stand out against the opening of Crossroads, no matter what the cost. He said he only asked for calm judgment and a square deal. He had no grudge against the Unions; he wanted all the Union men of ability that he could employ, but he wanted to reserve the right to dismiss men who had no ability, without danger of precipitating a strike. There was great applause at the close of his speech, and good feeling seemed to be the order of the day.

The crowd was to go from the meeting at the club-house to the main foundry, where the furnaces were to be fired. As the mass of men surged into the street, they were met by a mob of Union men hooting and calling "Scabs!" Parker took command at once, got his forces into some sort of military order, surrounded them with armed police, and ordered forward march to the foundry. He himself got into an auto car with several members of the Steel Trust, and rode along with the procession.

When they got to the door of the foundry, the crowd waited for Parker to lead the way. His car was packed about with his employees, hemmed in by the police, and they in turn by the

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Union malcontents. Parker's car came to a halt, and he rose and faced them all. The men gave him three times three on the instant, and he smiled and bowed his thanks.

Then all at once, from somewhere in the crowd a shot was fired that passed straight through Parker's heart. Without a moan he dropped back on the seat of the machine, and when his limp hand fell from the wheel, chaos ensued. The police clubbed their way into the Union mob, before the crowd broke loose. Conrad was captured without a fight, the smoking revolver in his hand. Part of the bluecoats hurried the steel workers into the foundry, where they could meet an attack, if need be, and then formed themselves into line, revolvers drawn, facing the mob. A few rocks were thrown and threats yelled at the police, but there was no attack, and no shooting. After a while the Union men decamped and moved away.

Parker's chauffeur, in the meantime, guided the machine out of the crowd, and took the body of the dead man back to the club-house, where it was cared for by the other men of the party.

So it was that Crossroads was baptized in

blood. It became for the minute the centre of interest of the whole country. The great warfare of modern forces was being waged there, and the death of Parker was the first casualty.

Four men were indicted for the murder, Conrad, who fired the shot; Gridley, the Union leader, whose intemperate speeches had roused the men to passion; Martin, the editor of a paper called *The Union*, who had preached opposition to the Trust in fiery editorials. The fourth man indicted was a Frenchman named Giron, who had made an incendiary speech the night before the murder, urging the men to burn the foundries rather than let them open non-Union. Giron made good his escape.

The main interest in the case lay in the question as to whether Conrad was the tool of the Union, acting under orders when he killed Parker, or whether he was a fanatic, acting on his own private reasons. The Union disclaimed all connivance in the affair, and repudiated Conrad entirely.

The State's attorney, who had caused the arrest of Gridley and Martin, set out to prove that the Union leaders had a purpose in common with

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Conrad, in that they intended to prevent the opening of the foundries, at any cost, if violence were necessary, evidenced by their speeches and editorials. He proved by quotations and reports of meetings, that through the editorials of Martin, and the speeches of Gridley and Giron, the Union men had been incited to violence, which resulted in the killing of Parker by a Union man. He read at length from the speech of Giron, delivered the night before the murder, calling upon the men to burn the foundries and blow up the town rather than let the Trust open it on an Open Shop basis.

The papers had a good deal to say about Giron. He was a brilliant, adventurous dare-devil, who for reasons of his own preferred America to his own country. The unsettled state of the American working-man offered a fine opportunity for a certain strategic ability such as the man possessed, and he had come to have more or less prominence in the unions, although the conservatives protested against him, as a radical. After the Crossroads affair he had feathered his heels, and the police could not lay hands on him.

Crossroads

The public took sides in the case from the beginning of the trial. Men of moneyed interests believed the affair would have wide-spread consequences, and urged capital punishment as the only possible remedy. The working-classes, secretly in sympathy with Conrad, held that the men ought to be let off with fines, or imprisonment.

Crossroads, after the first shock, got slowly under way, Open Shop. There was no more violence of any kind, for the Unions realized that this was no time for a mistake, with public opinion aroused over Parker's death; and Orkeney, whatever his intentions, was too wise to attempt a change of policy, in face of the canonization that followed the murder of his chief. It happened, as it so often does, that the plans and the mighty wheels he had set in motion went on, uninterrupted by the death of the man who conceived them and made them possibilities.

CHAPTER XVII

GIRON

DURING this summer of daily association, Judge Carteret and Richard had developed a warm friendship. The Judge stopped at the Lodge each morning and took Richard with him to the station, and at night they came out together. Richard was fully conscious of the fine tact that made him feel their common ownership of Hillcrest, that put all the Judge's possessions at his disposal, and yet never let him feel indebtedness. After his first resentment of Anne's admiration for him, and his own boyish suspicion of the Judge's feelings for Anne, Richard had faced about and become one of their neighbor's stanchest admirers.

As for the Judge, he interested himself in the younger man's slow growth and gradual coming into a realization of himself. "A case of arrested development," he said once to Cecilia, and she added one of her illuminating touches:

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“He’s like a plant that grows long underground and slowly. When he breaks through the soil, he will be in full bloom.”

During the hardest days of this absorbing trial in Judge Carteret’s court, Richard looked after the Judge like a son, and the older man grew to depend upon him greatly. Occasionally they would stay in town over night together, sleeping at the Barrett Senior’s town house. It was deserted save for a care-taker, and they would dine at the club, spend an hour or so at a roof garden, and then go out to the house for the night.

One afternoon in August the Judge telephoned Richard that he would have to stay in town over night, and asked him to look after Saxton. Richard insisted that the Judge go up to his father’s house to sleep, as it was cooler and quieter than the club. He would telephone the care-taker to have everything in readiness. About seven the Judge went to the club to dine, where to his surprise Richard joined him.

“An important matter came up, after you ’phoned, which I had to look after, so I telephoned out to Nan that we would both stay in

town. She said she would have Cecilia and Saxton to dinner and refused to lament our loss."

"The thought of that cool, quiet place out there, at the end of each day's journey, has done more to get me through this summer than anything else. I wish we were there, to go to Anne's dinner."

"Great place, the North Shore; sort of gets hold of you. Hillcrest is certainly a fine spot for Love's young dream, Judge. My wife tells me that Graves is heels over head in love with the 'Fraid lady."

"I think that is about the state of the case."

"Do you think he has a look-in there?"

"I know of no reason why he should not have. He's young, and clever, and good-looking."

"Queer idea, falling in love with that girl."

"You think so?"

"Yes. For all I like her tremendously, there is something kind of spooky about her."

"Spooky?"

"Yes, not human — kind of uncomfortable. You can't think of her around your house, singing to your kiddies, and that sort of thing."

The Judge smiled whimsically.

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"Yes, you can think of her so, only instead of 'Bye-lo, Baby' she would be apt to sing 'The Erl-King'!"

"That's just the trouble, she never does what anybody else would do."

"I can see that in a domestic relation that might be a drawback; but what relief, on general principles, to find a new set of impulses, a new set of actions! We get so jaded with people whom we can classify at a glance. Look around this room for instance. *Glover* — General class, Magnate; Hobby, destructive policy of present administration: *Richardson* — General class, Bluffer; Hobby, his own fitness for political office: *Carter* — General class, Promoter and high-class robber; Hobby, charitable institutions. You see you can tick them off at a glance because they are typical."

"Yes, but you're sure just how they'll act."

"Lamentably sure, Richard, lamentably!"

They lingered aimlessly over their dinner, and later when Richard proposed some summer show, the Judge protested that he was too tired, and suggested that they walk up the North Side, through the park. It was about nine o'clock

when they started, and they smoked and chatted of casual things. When they came to the park, it swarmed with people trying to find a cool place. Children ran about, playing in the grass, and mothers pushed perambulators up and down.

"Think of the quiet and peace at Hillcrest. It does not seem fair, does it? It makes Cecilia's impassioned plea for a chance for these people seem just."

"Oh, they're satisfied with the park; they would n't appreciate Hillcrest."

"That is the cotton-wool idea we wrap ourselves in, Richard. A man who has never bathed in the sea might enjoy the experience, if it came to him."

"Not this generation, Judge. It springs from non-bathing races; water externally applied is foolishness."

The Judge laughed, and they sat down on a bench to rest. Presently the conversation of two working-men nearby caught their attention.

"The public's sore on this Parker business. If the Union backed Conrad, it was a bum lead."

"Well, this here Carteret guy'll find out all there is to know. It's tough luck for the fel-

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lers, if he finds 'em guilty, for he ain't open to no fixin'."

"There's always a few old cranks to rake out the truth and kick up a fuss, an' bleat about honesty and justice. This ain't no time fer justice, it's time fer the Union to get things hushed up."

The men moved on and the Judge sighed.

"There's public opinion for you," laughed Richard.

"It's terrible, is n't it? — this bartering of justice, this weakening of the moral fibre of our people."

When they arrived at the Barrett house, the care-taker had some beer and sandwiches ready for them, and they sat for a while, still talking on the theme suggested by the chance conversation of the working-men. All at once a voice behind them remarked, "*Bon soir, messieurs.*"

They both started and faced about. A small wiry man, with a white face, stood bowing and smiling at them. He had the manner of a gentleman, and stood easily, even nonchalantly, under their inspection.

"How did you get in?" demanded Richard.

G i r o n

"An unimportant detail, Meester Barrett; ze main point ees, I am here. Judge Carteret, Meester Barrett! Gaston Giron, at your servicee."

Both men started at the name, and the stranger swept them another bow.

"Giron! What are you doing here?" demanded the Judge.

"I pay my respec' to you, Monsieur le Juge."

"Give yourself up like a man, and I'll hear what you have to say before a jury!"

"Every man hees own way," shrugged Giron. "I come to fin' out what posection you take in zees trial."

"Are you mad?"

"I am mad 'nor' by nor'east,'" he replied.

"Of all the impudence!" Richard burst out, "I'll call the police and hand him over. If you think you can bluff us, you've gotten in the wrong house."

Giron withdrew one hand from his coat pocket and covered Richard with a revolver.

"Let us not talk of poleece, let us be calm. Conseeder me a hostage from ze enemy, an' treat me wiz respec', ees all I ask."

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"Anything you say will be used against you when you come to trial," the Judge said.

"*When* — so small a word, so beeg wiz meaning!"

He walked over to the mantelpiece and examined a picture which hung above it.

"A Velasquez, and a ver' fine one, too. How American!" He flung out his hands at the swathed room. "Mere tables, mere chairs, protected, all covered; but zees, a masterpiece, which no dust should be allow to mar, zees zey overlook."

He ran his fingers along the frame and blew off the dust that clung to them. The Judge motioned Richard to sit down, and he resumed his own seat.

"You know Velasquez?"

"But yes, why not?"

"Mr. Barrett's father has a fine collection in this house."

"So? Sometimes Americans do buy good zings."

"Only sometimes?"

"As connoisseurs of art — well! As a people

you are *intéressant*, *naïf*, inconsistent, shrewd, greedy children."

"Will you join us in a sandwich and a glass of beer?" the Judge asked.

"Better not," warned Richard.

Giron sauntered to the table and sat down, one hand in his pocket, his eyes alert.

"You are mos' kind. I came wiz some idea I would keel you, I stay to accep' your hospitality."

"I am interested in knowing why you wished to shoot me."

"You remembair Stevenson's tale of 'Villon ze Vagabond'? We repeat it: I am ze hero, you ze unwilling host, monsieur," Giron replied, ignoring the Judge's question.

"You read Stevenson?"

"I read everyzing. Stevenson, he ees delightful: simple, sweet, refreshing. 'Jekyll and Hyde' and 'Ebb-tide,' not so sweet. Pardon ze effort of a chil' to play wiz psychology, ze trap-pings of adventure! Zees Stevenson, he should be American."

"You insist upon our childishness."

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"It impresses ze foreigner."

"I'm glad we are young and not rotten with age like France," Richard blurted out.

The Frenchman's swift glance shot at him like a stiletto. "You might learn much from France, monsieur. Ze old age of France has develop complexity; but you, you are clumsy wiz youth. On ze surface France ees changing, full of whims; underneath — ah, zat ees different. We plan, we are diplomats; but you! You are not subtle, my good monsieur; forceful, perhaps, but nevaire subtle."

"No, thank God!" said Richard heartily.

"Your way ees ze longest —"

The Judge had been watching him intently.

"You are a citizen of the United States?" he asked.

"I am citizen of all ze worl', Monsieur le Juge. All peoples, all countrees interes' me. I am what you call a soldier of fortune. I wield my sword for ze under dog, wherever I find heem."

"Quixotic, but impolitic."

"If all the stray foreigners who come over here for three weeks, and then tell us how to run

this country, would stay at home, and try their hands at their own affairs, some of the European countries might be a little less rotten," remarked Richard.

"Monsieur ees combative."

"I 'm an American, and I —"

"Same zing. American — combative. Children mus' fight; ze beeg boy take from ze leetle boy, onless ze leetle boy buy heem off."

"You think that a national characteristic?"

"America — she take over ze Philippines, Cuba, wiz much talk of liberating a down-trodden people. Incidentally she enreech herself some millions of dollairs. Wizout ze oratory, we call it stealing; wiz ze oratory, it becomes 'ze cause of humanity.' Ze American magnate, he rob an' ruin ze people, an' zen gives zem ze library, ze university, so he becomes a public benefactor. Wizout ze presents he ees just robber and cut-throat, but wiz zese gifts, he ees a demigod!"

"Very interesting, Mr. Giron, and no doubt amusing to an outsider."

"Not so amusing to an insider who can mark ze tendency; eh, Juge Carteret?"

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"No, it is not amusing. Still, I do not find it a cause for despair. There is just at present a low standard of public honesty, but it is the merest phase of our growth. Honesty is, and always has been, the best policy, to put it on the lowest basis; and without it, or with some substitute, our whole structure would fall. That certainly will never occur, Mr. Giron."

"Why don't you 'know-it-alls' have a look at the other side?" Richard asked him. "There is more personal honor to-day among men than there ever was in the history of business. Big enterprises, involving thousands of dollars, rest on the spoken word of one man to another, every day. It's all rot making so much of the crooked fellows."

"It ees ze exception zat ees interesting, nevaire ze rule, Meester Barrett. An' now, I fear I have imposed on you too long."

He rose, his hands in his pockets, and the Judge rose and faced him.

"It has been interesting to hear your views on these general subjects, Mr. Giron. I shall look forward to hearing them on a subject of interest to us both, in the near future."

Giron bowed.

“Meester Barrett, for my sake, just a veil, a screen over ze Velasquez. My thanks for your hospitality —”

Richard stood at the Frenchman’s right, the Judge opposite him.

“Mr. Giron, it is the duty of every citizen to try to hand you over to the authorities, as you know. It is my peculiar duty to do so. I have no desire to use force, but you can see for yourself that it is impossible for me to let you go. You are a man of brain and ability. Is there no way I can appeal to your sense of fairness in this matter?”

“My dear monsieur, eet mus’ be golden oratory zat would make me put my head through ze noose, so! I am armed; you are not. Your life ees valuable; mine ees not. I came to kill you, an’ I have changed my mind; but if you lift a hand to detain me, I shall have ze honor to shoot you dead. So be discreet, *mes amis*.”

Like a flash he covered them both, and backed out of the door; and when they rushed after him, there were no signs except a window open onto the terrace.

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“Of all the damned impudence!” said Richard.

“H’m,” mused the Judge, “rather interesting fellow. I wonder where I have seen him before.”

“Shall we try to follow him?”

“Useless. He’s too clever to be caught by us. I’ll call up the Chief of Police and tell him he’s been here. He may be able to get him, though I doubt it. Quite an interesting fellow,” he repeated. “I do wonder where I have seen those little black eyes!”

CHAPTER XVIII

IN THE LODGE GARDEN

THE night that the Judge and Richard elected to stay in town, Anne sent Bobby as a messenger to Cecilia and Saxton asking them to have dinner with her. When he came back bearing their acceptances, he was thoughtful for a little and then he startled his mother by saying, "Mudder, why don't my 'fwaid lady like Gwavey?"

"What makes you think she does not like him?"

"Well, I asked her tould she tome to dinner, an' she said she 'd like it; an' then I said Gwavey too, an' she said, 'Oh, pshaw!'"

"She was probably thinking of something else."

"When I tooked him up to where she painted, at de Judge's house, she said, 'Go way.'"

"You never can tell about ladies, and their likes and dislikes, Bobolink. I think 'Gravey' is very nice."

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"I like him. Not so dood as the Judge an' the 'Fwaid lady, but I like him dood. He plays wif me."

"If I were to make ice-cream, would you turn the freezer for me?"

"Yes, I would, but I don't like to, much. It gets my arm all tired and tickly."

"You could sit out in the garden and turn it, so it would not be so hot."

"I spose you got to do fings when it's a party."

"How would it be to have our dinner in the garden, like a picnic?"

"Oh yes, oh yes, an' me to fix the table?" he cried in delight.

"All right, but don't forget to wash the decorations this time. You remember you gave us squash blossoms once, and the worms got on the table cloth."

"I 'member. I was des' ashamed of dose ol' worms!"

Anne stooped to kiss him.

"We'll go tell Mrs. O'Brien that there is to be a party."

They went to the kitchen, where Mrs. O'Brien

In the Lodge Garden

was baking cookies. Bobby stopped at the threshold and sniffed.

"Ain't it dood? It 's mos' as sweet as flowers."

"Will ye listen at that?" said Bridget proudly.

"'T is the cutest things he thinks av to say, mum. I know a nice bye who 's goin' to git two cookies fer thim worrds."

"Bidgie, we've got a party, an' we got to save de cookies unless dere is a big lot."

"A party is ut?"

"Miss Carné and Mr. Graves are coming to dinner, and Mr. Barrett is to stay in town all night."

"The poor lamb, shut oop in that oven av a town, on a noight like this. 'T is I that used to like the city, mum, but since we've had the Lodge, it 's me fer the counthry ivry toime."

"I think we're all a little touched on the subject of the Lodge," laughed Anne. "Bobby and I thought it would be fun to have supper in the garden."

"An' me to fix de table."

"Sure, 't is all the same to me, mum, but why ye prefer ants and bugs and spiders a-nippin' at ye, whin ye can sit in your own dining-room

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and ate like a Christian, I can't fer the loife av me see."

"Bridget, you 've no soul for romance; has she, Bobby?"

"I fink she has, mudder, but she don't show 'em."

"God bliss his kind little hearrt, he won't have the old woman abused, he won't."

"We 're doin' to have ice-cweam, Bidgie."

"I 'll get it ready now, dear, so you won't have to hurry," his mother said, and began to mix the cream.

Fifteen minutes later Mrs. O'Brien set the freezer outside the back door, facing the garden, and Bobby began to grind away. Presently they heard him talking to himself.

"I don't like to turn you, you ol' fweezer, but when it's a party you got to do fings for your mudder. I don't care if I det my mind off of you. I 'll be a autom'bile, or else a burglar."

He ground the handle frantically, calling out,

"Hi, there, Mrs. Hollyhock, do you want to det killed? You 'll det your ol' stalk bwoken, while you wubber over de fence."

In the Lodge Garden

“‘Rubber’—did you hear that? What a boy he’s getting to be!” sighed Anne.

“Sure, ’t will be no toime at all before he’s wearin’ long pants; an’ what’s to become av me thin?”

“Don’t suggest such a thing! My baby!”

“And moine, too,” spoke up Bridget O’Brien.

“Ol’ burglar, I ’m sorry I dot to tatch you,” the voice outside went on; “but you’re mean. You scare ladies, an’ you take pwesents for yourself. You must n’t, it’s stingy. You jus det pwesents for your mudder an’ your daddy an’ your Judge, an’ the ’Fwaid lady, an’ Gwavey, an’ Bidgie, amen. Oh, no; dat’s pwayers. I tell you, burglar, if you won’t do it any more, I ’ll let you do.”

Anne peeped out at him and saw that he was addressing a black and gold butterfly, which he held gently between his fingers. He pressed his captive to his ear until he heard him promise to reform, and then he let him go.

“Tired, Boy-boy?” Anne called to him.

“I ’m a lil tingly.”

“I ’ll take a turn,” she smiled, sitting beside him.

The Girl Who Lived in the Woods

"You must n't get tingly, because you're a lady."

"Who teaches you these gallantries, my knight?"

"I don't know. What is dat?"

"A gallant is a gentleman who is very polite to the ladies."

"Gwavey talks 'bout de ladies. He says you must let dem get de last word, ol' sport, it makes 'em feel gooder. Why does it, mudder?"

Anne laughed merrily. "My son, that is one of the mysteries." Saxton came into view, waving his hat. "Am I too early for the party?"

"How dare you teach my youngling your worldly sophistries?"

He halted, the picture of despair. "I knew something would happen to part us. He is the best chum I ever had, and now, as usual, a woman is to come between us."

"Mudder, are you scoldin' him?" anxiously.

"No, I'm warning him that the most unexpected word, dropped upon the surface of this infantile mind, takes root and grows."

"That reproof is most tactfully administered, fair lady, and I shall profit by it."

In the Lodge Garden

"Would you like to turn de fweezer a lil, Gwavey?"

"Really, Bobby, it is n't fair to ask him to dinner and then make him work."

"But he 'll want to eat the ice-cweam; he likes it."

"True! And he who eats must work; eh, old sport?"

Graves took the handle from Anne and began to grind.

"You get out and be the monkey, while I grind the organ," he said to Bobby.

Anne went to help Bridget.

"If you 'll 'scuse me, Gwavey, I dot to det de flowers for de party."

"And leave me here, grinding alone, with no one to amuse me?"

"When it's a party, evwybody helps," quoth Bobby, and marched to his garden.

"There is more sense in what that kid says than in all my 'garbled throat noises, labelled conversation'!" Graves remarked.

Cecilia came in view just then, with Omar at her heels, and Bobby hailed her joyfully. Her clear voice rang out in reply, and Saxton sighed.

The Girl Who Lived in the Woods

“ ‘Then, then a song that was sweeter far
Than thrush’s or lark’s rose near me,’ ”

he hummed, as she came across the garden and joined Anne.

She threw Saxton a cool nod.

“ ‘What care I how fair she be,
If I be not fair to she?’ ”

he muttered dolorously, and thought, “How wonderfully they have tamed the wild bird, how sweet she is!”

“Dinner in the garden, that’s good,” said Cecilia. “What shall I do to help?”

“Nothing to do here. Bridget and I are almost through. You might rescue poor Mr. Graves. He looks like ‘Melancholy,’ a study by Dürer.”

“A little freezing is good for him,” laughed Cecilia. “I ’ll help Bobby.”

“How many years am I condemned to this wrenching torment?” called Graves.

“Does it turn hard?” Anne called back.

“You bet it does.”

Bridget, on her way to the kitchen, stopped and tried it.

In the Lodge Garden

"'T is frozen good an' sthiff, an' that 's no lie. 'T is a foine job ye 've done, Mr. Graves, sor."

"The Governor let me off for good behavior," Saxton remarked as he joined Anne. "Now what?"

"Would n't you like to help Bobby, too?"

"I have learned to keep my wants in that direction firmly concealed."

"You are n't coming on with the lady?"

"Far from it. I slide back two or three yards every day!"

"You 're not discouraged?"

"Discouraged? I have some fifty years of manly strength and vigor left me. I ought to be able to do something in that time."

Cecilia and Bobby came toward them, their arms full of old-fashioned flowers. "The scheme of decoration is entirely original with Bobby," she explained. "He says the party is mixed, so he thinks the flowers ought to be mixed too."

They all laughed, and as soon as Bobby had the centrepiece arranged to his liking, they sat down. The sun was low in the sky, and the scent of garden things came to them pungently.

The Girl Who Lived in the Woods

"It's a pretty good world," sighed Saxton, bromidically.

"Why credit the world with your own physical satisfaction and well-being? It's like congratulating Nature on being artistic."

"You take a pretty speech too literally, Cecilia," Anne protested.

"Possibly. I'm not a judge of pretty speeches. I am apt to take people's words literally."

"You ought to be a judge of pretty speeches, you've killed and maimed and buried a graveyardful in the last three weeks," Saxton complained.

Bobby suddenly leaned forward and said in a stage whisper:

"Let de ladies have de last word, Gwavey, it makes 'em feel dooder."

At this they all shouted, and Bobby looked from one to another anxiously, not sure whether he had successfully averted the imminent discussion.

"You see, you don't like Gwavey, an' I fought you 'd let him be if he 'd do dat," he explained to his guest.

In the Lodge Garden

There was a moment of embarrassed silence, which Cecilia relieved.

"You are quite wrong. There are moments when I like Mr. Graves very much. If he didn't talk so incessantly, I'd like him very well."

"I wish you would, 'tause I like him."

"Thanks, old chap, mum's the word for me from now on; but you slip in a word for me now and then."

Anne steered them away from personalities, and after supper, while Graves smoked and talked to Anne, Cecilia and Bobby played "Pan and the Dryad," a game they had invented. It was a pretty thing to watch, so Anne and Saxton decided, as Bobby, impersonating a miniature Pan, knocked on the tree trunk and inquired if the Dryad was at home. She refuses to reply, so he strikes the tree with his staff; whereupon she runs away and Pan has to catch her. Round the garden and into the wood ran the nymph, with all the grace and abandon of the real *Syrinx*. When Pan caught her at last, she called on Diana for help, and that obliging goddess turned her into all sorts of strange

shapes. Bobby never knew what the Dryad would become, but it was always new and deliciously thrilling.

After the game, when Bridget had led Bobby off to bed, the three grown-ups sat long under the trees and talked. The night and the peace seemed to have sunk into their hearts, and the talk was friendly and pleasant. When they rose at last, Cecilia touched Anne's cheek softly with her finger tips.

"Good-night, sweet Anne; it is good to be with you."

She and Saxton set off through the woods, where some weeks before she and the Judge had seen the vision. She thought with a pang how little she saw of the Judge these days, and her resentment at Saxton's presence rose again. He came between them, he was always about, and he showed no signs of ever going back to town. She looked up with the intention of asking when he meant to go, and found his eyes fixed on her, in the most disconcerting way.

"I have never known you to be quiet for so many minutes before," she said brusquely.

In the Lodge Garden

"I am acting on orders. If I can win your approval by being dumb, dumb will I be."

"I see no reason why you should reform the habit of a lifetime just to suit me."

"I 'd do anything on earth to suit you."

"That 's a big order."

"Have n't you the faintest idea that I am trying to make love to you?"

She looked at him quickly.

"No; are you?"

"I am, and have been for weeks, and precious little help or encouragement I get."

"I don't want you to do it."

"But I have to!"

"Go away, then; go back to town. Don't you see that I am entirely absorbed in my work? I cannot put my mind on outside things."

"That 's what hurts so — being made to feel that I am an outside thing, when I —"

"Hurts? Why, I had n't thought of that. I never thought of your side at all," she said seriously, looking at him as if for the first time. "I only just knew that you annoyed me somehow or other. I 'm sorry; I 'll try to be decent."

The Girl Who Lived in the Woods

"I 'd rather you would n't *try* to be decent."

They did not speak again until they reached her house.

"I will go back to town if you want me to, if it is disagreeable for you to have me about. Your comfort and pleasure are the only things I really care about."

"I don't want you to go that way, it seems so special if you put it that way; only just — just — Oh, I don't know; I 'll think it over and we 'll see. I wish you had n't gone and done this."

"I could n't help it. Good-night, Cecilia Carné," he added softly.

"Good-night," she replied, and went in and shut the door and leaned against it, as if to shut him out more effectively.

"He 's tiresome when he 's flippant and silly, but he 's simply unbearable when he 's serious! I won't have it — this tender possessive business; it interrupts my thoughts!" she said firmly.

CHAPTER XIX

ON THE BEACH

DURING the week that followed Anne's dinner, Cecilia made a valiant effort to treat Saxton Graves with some sort of friendliness, a fact which transported him to the seventh heaven, and deceived one on-looker at least, and that was Judge Carteret.

Several times he had come out on an early train, to get in a round of golf, and found Cecilia painting away on her high trestle, with Saxton lounging beneath her. The Judge recalled with a smile her words about "that man" who was not to step over the threshold of her sanctum on pain of death. To be sure Bobby usually made a third to the party, but the Judge did not think of that.

One afternoon he came out early and found the house empty, so he started off aimlessly toward the beach, to see if he could find traces

of his guests. He came upon them there, Cecilia idly tossing pebbles into the water, with Saxton reading aloud to her. The Judge would have turned back, if Cecilia had not looked up at the moment and seen him there. Without a word of apology to Graves, poised in the midst of a poetical flight, she rose and ran toward the Judge, pleasure shining in her face.

"Oh, good! I'm so glad you've come," she cried, and drew him along with her. Saxton's delight in the interruption was somewhat disguised, but he managed a decent greeting to his host.

"Glad you got out so early. Going to play golf?" he inquired.

"Thought some of it. I don't want to interrupt. Is this a literary party?" he replied.

"He's reading me some Irish poems. They're good, too. Here's a place all hollowed out for you, in the sand. Shall we go on, or would you rather talk?"

"Go on, by all means. I would like to hear something that would take possession of my thoughts."

"Read him the 'Four Winds of Eirinn.' "

On the Beach

Saxton began again, and the Judge watched them closely. It was working, no doubt, that subtle "call of youth to youth" as he had named it to Cecilia. Graves loved the weird Celtic songs he was reading; he read them well, his mellow voice making them very effective. They were primitive passions which the bard had sung, big in their simplicity; and Saxton knew what ones to read to the avid listener, who sat, her hands clasped about her knees, her chin upon them, and her eyes far over the water. It was like her to give him her absorbed attention, her face now pale, as if with weeping over Ireland's woes, now flushed with pride at her victories.

Judge Carteret let his tired mind have its will. The sunlight on the water, the lapping of the waves, the soft warm bed of sand where he lay, the voice of the reader, they all soothed him. In the face of this elemental principle of attraction, working itself out between these two young people, whose lives were yet before them, it smote him with a surprise that was pain, that his life was behind him. The future meant no working out of divine susceptibilities; it meant only a calm, the quiet pleasures of introspection.

For the first time Judge Carteret faced the fact, crowded out of his busy thoughts until now, that he had reached the turning-point, where mature, masterful manhood looks ahead one step, into the peaceful meadows of middle age. The thought brought with it a hot surge of rebellion. It should not be; his work was only just begun, his pleasures all untasted; he must have time. He remembered Everyman's pleading with Death in the miracle play, his paltry childish reasons why Death should grant him grace, and he smiled at his own similar plight.

Romance had been crowded out of his experience, partly because, as a boy, he had taken the Law for his mistress, and she had opened to him the doors of humanity, and he had felt no other need. This dry-as-dust sovereign had pointed out to him the kingdoms of want, misery, and wretchedness, and he had entered in, girded with the weapons of youth, to do battle with the giants.

Life had sped by him, as the scenery runs by the engineer, who sits, hand on throttle, transporting people from one place to another. So Judge Carteret sat, alert and engrossed in transferring the portion of humanity about him to

On the Beach

other and better places, conditions, and environments. He had forgotten Time, the enemy, so full his days had been; and now, all at once, something had struck him into self-consciousness. He wondered to himself what it was. The nascent love, the mating of two young people, surely that was a common enough spectacle. This girl, with her vividness, her frank friendliness, could it be that she had sent this clarion call to his senses?

He turned to look at her, and started at the intensity of her gaze, as if she went with him, step by step, in thought. He smiled at her, and her own smile flashed response.

"You are n't listening, either of you," complained Graves, looking up at the moment.

"I plead guilty," said the Judge. "My thoughts were dipping into strange waters, like those gulls out there."

Cecilia's eyes followed his gesture.

"Were they bitter waters, Judge Carteret?" she asked him.

Just then Bobby came rushing down the hill, waving his arms, Omar pell-mell behind him.

"I've been all over de world for you, Gwavey.

The Girl Who Lived in the Woods

Dere's a man wants you, an' nobody knowed where you wented, so I said I'd find you."

"A man? Bother him! Much obliged, old chap. Will you excuse me for a moment? I'll get rid of him and come right back. Coming up, Bobby?"

"No, Omar an' I are doin' to play in de water."

Saxton climbed up the hill out of sight, and Bobby kicked off his sandals, and he and Omar raced up and down the beach. The Judge and Cecilia watched them in silence for a few minutes.

"Are n't they refreshing? How all young animals do give you the feeling of the promise-fulness of life!" he said to her. "We all go at it with the same vim, with never a thought, thank God, of all those that have gone before us, beaten their way through somehow, and gone into the Beyond."

"Something has happened to-day that makes you sad."

"I have lost something to-day, something very dear to me."

She leaned toward him quickly.

"You mean?"

On the Beach

"My youth."

"Your youth?"

"Yes. No doubt the world ceased to think of me as a young man years ago, but it has never come to me until to-day. It is your own point of view after all, that makes you young or old."

"What made you think of it to-day?"

"I don't know; you, perhaps. You and Saxton, my dear young friends; your feeling for one another, the vista it suggests of a future full of things that have not come to me."

A slow blush dyed Cecilia's face and throat, and she sprang up, and away down the beach to where Omar and Bobby splashed together. The Judge looked after her curiously, and wondered if he had offended her. After a bit she came back and without hesitation took up their interrupted talk where they had left it.

"You get the kind of things in life that you really want. You can't have all the things. It is like children in a toyshop: one child knows what he wants the minute he sees it; another child wants everything he sees, or just what the child next him has."

The Girl Who Lived in the Woods

"Suppose you never gave your own wants a thought, because you were so interested in what other children wanted?"

"It is hard for me to imagine that, my own impulses are so selfish and individual."

"That is n't true; you would give every atom of yourself to any cause that you espoused," he contradicted her.

"Oh, yes, that. I meant I'm selfish about my own inner life. I will not let other people and their wants interfere. I suppose if you had not come, you and the Barretts and Bobby, that after a while I should have been entirely shut in, with a high wall about me."

"The farmers have a phrase, 'intensive farming.' It might be used in mind-culture too. The intensive method gets more out of the ground, makes the individual more interesting no doubt; but Nature cares nothing for the individual, it is the race that counts. To improve the general average is her work, and ours too, is n't it?"

"I don't care about Nature's interest; I care about my own life and its meaning. The more

On the Beach

I turn to myself, the more I live according to my first impulses, the more myself I become. It is only so that I am of interest to myself. If I have all the attributes, mental and spiritual, of Mrs. X and Mrs. Y, I'll bore myself as much as they bore me."

The earnestness with which she spoke made the Judge laugh.

"It is difficult to think of you as Mrs. X or Mrs. Y!"

"I did not want people to like me, until I knew you all out here. I enjoyed myself more than I did other people."

"You did not want us to like you, nor did you want to like us; we all felt that."

"See what I might have shut myself off from."

"You have changed wonderfully in these few months. Do you realize it, Cecilia?"

"For the better, do you think, Judge Peter?"

"For the better, surely. You see, when you shut yourself up like that, you cut yourself off from the love of your fellows and their love of you. No one can afford to miss that out of life."

The Girl Who Lived in the Woods

"I sit and gape at my own self these days. I'm even trying to be gentle, like Anne and Bobby, and not hurt people's feelings."

"It is a lovely trait, is n't it — gentleness?"

"I've always confounded it with weakness, I'm afraid."

"It goes more often with strength. Anne, for all her seeming gentle femininity, proved herself a rock of granite in the crisis that came to Richard and herself. Richard's was the nature to sink in disaster; but her strong arm held him up, and forced him to swim. See what a man she is making of him."

"Yes, she and you together."

"The credit is hers; she has loved him into being what God intended him to be. I've only helped wherever I saw a chance."

"'Helped wherever I saw a chance'—that is your motto, I think, Judge Peter."

"No, I miss many a chance, my dear, and that's the pity of it."

He looked off in silence for a while, and she felt the long flight of his thoughts, though she could not follow them. He came to himself with a start and half rose.



The Judge looked off in silence for a while, and she felt
the long flight of his thoughts

On the Beach

"Poor Saxton, it is too bad he's detained so long. I'll go and see if I can release him."

"He'll come presently. I never get a chance to talk to you any more, he's always about."

The Judge patted her hand and laughed.

"He seems to be pretty much 'about' these days. I'm so glad that you've come to like each other."

"Why?"

"Because I'm fond of you both, and I'd like to see you happy."

"You mean you think that if I — married him — married Mr. Graves, that I'd be happy?"

"Why not, if you love each other?"

"But how could we love each other?"

"My dear girl, it's an accomplished fact in Saxton's case, and love begets love, they say."

"And you think I am that sort of person?"

"All sorts of persons, exceptional and mediocre, go down before the blind god, I'm told, and act according to his laws, which happen to be Nature's, and without any regard for their own predilections."

"That makes love a common thing, does n't it? Rank and file all affected in the same way; all

the world simpering and cooing! Bah, I want none of it!"

"There's your deification of the individual again, Cecilia. Why not think of love as a great pure flood of water, in which all humanity may bathe and find refreshment. The waters of refreshment," he mused aloud, "like the pool of Bethesda, where the maimed in spirit, the crippled of soul, and the blind of heart, may be revived!"

"Love is no such thing to me," she protested passionately.

The Judge smiled at her and shook his head. "I thought the 'Fraid lady was a creature of the past, but here she is again, afraid to face a reality of life, to share its biggest emotion with her kinfolk, her blood brothers. She wants all this great world-force saved and sanctified for her one self."

"You make me feel so mean and little," she cried.

He put his hand over hers.

"No, no, not that, I only want you to open your eyes and see that it is in these human re-

lationships, which you will not admit, that we are worthful and of import."

To his surprise she laid her cheek for a moment against his hand; but before he could speak, Saxton hailed them from the hill-top and began to descend toward them.

CHAPTER XX

CECILIA PLANS A PARTY

THE Judge's words about human relationships sank deep into Cecilia's mind. She felt that he had gently pointed out to her where she failed to live up to his ideal, and it came to her with force, how much she wanted to be all that he thought fine and womanly. He was right about the price she had to pay for her self-absorption. In the first place she had shut herself up to escape people, and later she had shut herself in with a few chosen ones, saying "Be-gone!" to all the world besides.

Her thoughts drifted back to the old days of the studios, the friendships lightly made there, and as lightly dropped again. They were days she hated to look back upon now, since the wonderful peace of Hillcrest had descended upon her, but the Judge had wakened her from her apathy and pointed out the way. In her anxiety

to please him, she sent her rebellious thoughts back to these old companions of hers, and their life in "the Quarter" as they called it. The whole motley crowd came trooping before her mind's eye. There was a girl named Sally Waterman, whom everybody loved and looked after. She had come up from the country to learn to paint, and for years, in spite of hardships, she had stuck to her brush, in her uninspired way, although all the painters in town told her it was useless, she could never paint. Poor, dogged, little "Sally Waters," as they called her, what had become of her? Cecilia wondered.

Then there was a brilliant erratic creature named Nita Scarlotti, Italian born, a genius, and a foredoomed failure. When she was in the mood, she painted wonderfully, but she worked only when stern necessity wielded a cudgel. She was a radical, a socialist, and a reformer. "What is is never right, and must be changed," was her motto. Unmoral she was, uncontrolled, and yet there was never a soul in the Quarter too low, too poor, too desperate for Scarlotti's pity and help. Once Sally Waters

fell ill, and as usual had no money, so Scarlotti took her in, and worked like a slave to support her, for months.

There was Hilda Fulstrom, the Norwegian girl who was becoming famous, and Nora Gallahan, with her merry Irish tongue. There was Arnold Gaines, the socialist journalist, and Jimmy Bronson, who modelled cleverly. Scarlotti had found him starving somewhere and brought him home to the Quarter, since when he had been her bond slave. There was Allwyn, sensitive, almost too fragile for this workaday world, trying to sell exquisite poem plays, in a day of commercialized drama and sordid theatrical ideals. They all crowded back upon her, with their good points and their bad, and she remembered how ready their hands had been to give her a lift where a lift was needed.

How many thoughts had she given them since the day she fled away from them and hid herself in the woods? She had swept them out of her mind without compunction, and she looked back at them now, as a disembodied spirit might look down from heaven, upon those who still struggled in the whirlpool. The Judge thought

Cecilia Plans a Party

she had duties toward these people; he believed that winning heaven for herself was not enough.

Suddenly she had an inspiration. The day after she had begun her work at the Judge's house, a check and a deposit book came to her, with a card from the Judge, saying that if she would deposit the check at the bank, the sum would be subject to her use. She had protested to the Judge, without any effect, and as he would not take the things back, she had stuck them away in a jar on the mantelpiece and forgotten all about them. She was so used to discounting the need of money, that the possession of this sum did not seem to interest her.

But here was a use for it; she would indorse the check according to the Judge's directions, and send it to Scarlotti to use in the Quarter. For a moment her heart quite thrilled at the thought of what such a sum, in the hands of Scarlotti, would mean to the Quarter. Then it came over her that this was all flim-flam, an easy way to salve her conscience.

"Bah, that's the Mrs. Grantley sort of charity," she scoffed at herself.

It was Sunday morning and she went out on

her doorstep and looked off over the water, and it flashed into her mind all at once, what that view would mean to the Quarter, what it had meant to her a year ago. That was something she could give them. She could ask them all out to share with her the quiet and loveliness of the country, and let them find something of the peace that had come to her.

She marched off to Hillcrest at once, where she found the Judge and Saxton deep in the Sunday papers. She outlined her scheme to them and they were enthusiastic. The Judge offered the house and grounds, and Saxton offered his entire resources personal and otherwise, to make the proposed outing a success.

"It is splendid of you," he said, "and how they will enjoy it."

"Don't get a wrong impression of it," Cecilia said. "If I had been really unselfish, I would have thought of it long ago. I never bothered a thing about them until the Judge said something that opened my eyes."

"I said something?" the Judge inquired.

"Yes. You said that it was only in our human relationships that we are worthful or of

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import. If you had n't said that, and if you had n't given me all that money for the joy of doing your library walls, I should not have bothered my head about the Quarter. I should have forgotten how much they used to do for me."

"Of course you would not have forgotten. In time you would have remembered and wanted to even up the score," the Judge said.

"You think that goodness always wins out in us, in the end, don't you? Maybe it does, but I did n't start with much, and I've lost a good deal on the way to now."

The Judge laughed. "You are one of the most serious-minded people I ever met. Under some conditions you would have been a hide-bound Puritan."

"As it is, I'm a Pagan!" she smiled back. "I'm going over to ask Anne and Bobby to help me. I'm obliged to you two."

"I'll come along," said Saxton.

"No, thanks, I don't want you," said Cecilia in reply.

The Judge had to smile at Saxton's rueful face. "She still has her burrs, our Cecilia, but

how she grows within! The field of her spirit lies rich and fallow; we must be careful what seeds we let fall there."

Saxton paced to and fro without replying, while the Judge forgot his paper and sat looking off into space.

Meanwhile, Cecilia explained her idea to the Barretts, and they agreed gladly to help her. She was deeply touched at their ready friendliness; it gave her a new feeling of the dear place she held in their hearts. Her own clamped with a sort of terror at loosing the old turbulent elements of her life into this new one. Then she hated herself for her meanness. Here were these people ready to welcome the Quarter into their homes, and give hospitality to strangers, and she was niggardly of her friendship for her old companions.

"I don't know whether you'll like them, Anne," she said. "They don't live quite according to your standards. But I know it will help them, to know you."

"That's a pretty compliment, dear. I used to think my standards were the only ones, but

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I am growing to distrust them a little; I find so many others equally good."

"I could help you to get them out here," Richard offered. "You decide on a train and I'll act as Cook guide."

"Thanks."

The Judge and Saxton came over to discuss the plan, and the Judge insisted that he should be allowed to provide the picnic.

"I'd like to tell you something about the Quarter and all of them, if you'd care to hear," Cecilia said, after they had talked over the plans.

"That's the idea; let's hear about our guests, so we can make them have a good time," Richard added.

They sat about on the porch, in the big chairs and hammocks, Cecilia in the midst, and in her swift picturesque way she set them down in the midst of the Quarter. She sketched in its physical outline, its narrow streets and high old-fashioned buildings. It had been at one time a fashionable dwelling district, and the old houses and improvised flat buildings still retained a certain dingy elegance. She made her

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audience feel the humor, the tragedy, the farce, the sordidness, and the pathetic quality of the Quarter.

Then she marched the leading characters in, like people in a play; she told about their successes and their failures; the loves and hates that grew and died there. She made them thrill with the hand-to-hand conflict that went on there, in which the artist almost inevitably stood to lose, because existence with us is a practical thing, and we make little provision for those who would transcribe for us its beauty. When she finished, there was a long appreciative silence.

"That's great! I'm crazy to meet them; I want to help to make them have the time of their lives," said Saxton.

"It makes you feel as if you had no right to all this peace and beauty," Anne said, pointing off to the quiet scene before them.

"That's it, that's just it, the nag and the wear and the heart-pull of it, a world of strife and warfare," said Cecilia. "That's why I ran away and shut it out. You can't possibly help it all, and you choke your innermost being with the eternal pity of it."

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"No, passion and revolt do not help, Cecilia," the Judge interposed. "You must have calm dispassionate judgment, or you beat yourself to bits on the rocks of pity, like a toy sailboat. Each one of us can help a little, and we must be content with such strength and opportunity as we have. I believe that one such day as you propose to give these friends of yours, may change the trend of whole lives, and better them. Surely that is worth while."

"I'll pick lots of flowers for de picnic, and I'll let 'em play wif Omar."

"Seems to me, a day spent with Anne and Bobby ought to make anybody better," said Richard proudly.

"Why, Richard!" Anne protested.

"He's quite right," said the Judge.

"They're awfully hot in their views, political views and all. I hope you won't be offended at them. You see, they hate people with money and leisure, and they are n't fair to them."

"Then they won't mind Omar and Bobby and me,—we're poor enough to make a distinct hit."

"I want them to see how fair you all are; that's what I could n't believe at first."

The Girl Who Lived in the Woods

“What a pity that all God’s creatures can’t speak the same language, and understand one another better. Live and let live is such a fair agreement, and so few of us are willing to subscribe to it.”

“That’s about the hardest thing we have to do, to get the other fellow’s point of view,” Saxton remarked.

“To be tolerant and to keep faith, those are the big things. I’d like to say, ‘I’ve fought the good fight and kept the faith!’ when I cash in,” Richard said.

They all looked at him in surprise, it was so unusually intimate for Richard. Anne leaned over the back of his chair and laid her cheek against his head. Cecilia rose and took Bobby’s hand. There were tears of gratitude in her eyes, as she left them, but all she said was, “Thank you, all of you, dear people!”

CHAPTER XXI

THE PICNIC

THE gods were good to Cecilia, and August 24, the day set for her party, was a rare late-summer day. The guests were to arrive under Richard's direction, on the ten-thirty, so that they might make a long day of it in the country. The station bus was to drive them to Hillcrest, and everything was arranged with care for their comfort and pleasure.

Anne, Saxton, Mrs. O'Brien, and Bobby had been busy since early morning, getting food prepared, for Cecilia had no idea how many her guests were to be. She had simply invited the Quarter, and the Quarter had accepted. Lunch was to be served on the bluff, in front of Cecilia's cabin. The only disappointment was that the Judge had to go in to town, but he promised to come out early and join in the afternoon festivities.

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"As far as I can see, everything is ready now," said Anne. "I'll go and put on a fresh gown and make myself look presentable."

Cecilia looked down at her short skirt and sailor's blouse. "This is all I have," she said bluntly. It was the first time she had thought of it.

"Wear one of my gowns to-day. I know we could make it fit, and I would so love to see you really dressed."

"I never think about clothes. It's good of you, Anne, but the Quarter is used to me this way, and I'd be miserable in your dress, for fear I'd ruin it."

"Nonsense, you're welcome to it, if you want it."

"I must have always offended you in these things of mine. Why have n't you spoken of it?"

"It would have been a delicate thing to speak of. You have not offended me, because I'm so fond of you."

"How stupid I am not to realize how — how queer I am! I suppose the Judge thinks I look different, too."

The Picnic

"He probably never thought anything about it. You look like you, and that is enough for us. I must run along."

"I 'll get some clothes," said Cecilia.

Bobby and Omar came along on their twentieth trip, bringing decorations and tributes. He laid them at Cecilia's feet, and she found a place for each new treasure.

"Bobby, dear, that 's all we can possibly use," she said. "Sit down and rest a bit, you and Omar, and then we 'll go to the station and meet our party."

He sat down beside her with a grunt, which indicated his degree of tiredness, and Omar stretched out in front of them. Cecilia threw her arm about the boy and hugged him to her.

"It 's foolish to be so afraid —" she whispered.

"Are you de 'Fwaid lady?"

"Yes, always the 'Fraid lady. I 'm so afraid I 'm going to lose all this happiness I 've built up about me like a castle. I feel here in my heart as if it were about to crumble, that maybe this day will tumble it about my ears; and I can't bear it, Bobby."

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"Who 's doin' to tumble down your tastle?"

"Somebody who is coming nearer to me now," she said.

"Omar and Bobby 'ull chase him."

"You love me more than any one does, you and Omar; so you must help me to protect my castle."

"Us will!" he promised stoutly.

She kissed him, and they went to the Lodge, where Saxton was to call for them and drive them to the station.

When the ten-thirty pulled in, Richard appeared and helped off the ladies. Scarlotti first, and Nora and Hilda and Sally Waters, and then came Jimmy and Arnold Gaines and Allwyn and several others new to the Quarter since she left it. They fell upon her with abandon, as if they had seen her yesterday, with a childish delight in the frolic she had planned for them. When Cecilia had greeted them all, she introduced Saxton and Bobby, and ushered them all into the bus.

Scarlotti took Cecilia aside and explained that a friend whom she had expected to bring out with her, had lost the train, and she would wait

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for the next one, and see if he came out on it. Cecilia promised to have the Judge's man drive over after the lost friend and hustled Scarlotti in with the others.

As they came on to the country road that led to Hillcrest, Cecilia watched for a pause when they first caught sight of the great sheet of water beyond, but there was no cessation in the hubbub and chatter. They were a little noisier than she had remembered them. And how queer they did look! Scarlotti, whose black hair and eyes were striking enough, wore a cloak made of upholstery stuff in old rose and gold, and a strange hat draped in a gold scarf. She looked like a matador ready for the fight. Nora and Hilda and Sally wore queer unusual things, and the men wore their hair long, and their neckties voluminous and soft. Cecilia hated herself for the thought of how they would startle Anne. Her own uncouth clothes offended her.

"We've missed you in the Quarter," said Arnold Gaines. "The Cause is gaining ground — we are getting converts through the Trades Unions."

"That's good."

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Arrived at Hillcrest, they swarmed about the Lodge, where Anne stood to receive them. She met each one with just the right greeting, and put them at their ease at once.

"Now, *mes amis*," said Cecilia, "we have not made any plans for you. The whole place is entirely at your disposal. Judge Carteret has said that we may go anywhere, and do what we please."

"Judge Carteret? Peter Carteret?" inquired Gaines.

"Yes, this is his place; the Barretts and I are his neighbors. It is through his kindness that I am able to have you out here," she added.

"You are hobnobbing with high society these days," said Scarlotti, and Cecilia flushed hotly.

"Judge Carteret is n't 'high society,' he is just one of us."

"One of us? Not on your life," said Gaines.

"Working to do things, just as we are. But I asked you out here to relax and play, not to think or preach. Every man to his own devices, until one o'clock, when we are to lunch on the bluff, in front of my cabin. Perhaps we

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would better go over there first, so you 'll know where to come."

She led the way off through the woods, and the procession fell in behind, with the Barretts and Omar in the rear.

"Is n't it snobbish, dear, that the idea of helping people is so much nicer than really doing it?" Anne said.

"Queer lot, are n't they? Creatures of another world."

At the cabin they took possession and commented freely on everything. Then in twos and threes they wandered away, leaving Allwyn, Hilda, and Cecilia at the cabin, while the Barretts went to play hosts at the big house.

"You work here?" asked Hilda.

"All the time, everywhere. It is a wonderful place to work. Just now I am doing murals at the big house, so I have to work indoors, in a studio."

They sat under the trees on the bluff, where Allwyn stretched out full length, on his back.

"I should never work here — just dream myself into Nirvana!" he sighed.

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"He is a fool!" said Hilda.

"Allwyn a fool? No fool could dream as he dreams, Hilda."

"He can't live on dreams. He makes no money, and he is always hungry. I want to marry him and take care of him, but he says no."

"You, Hilda, want to marry him?"

"Why not? I love him."

"You love Allwyn?" in astonishment.

Hilda nodded and Cecilia turned to the poet.

"It is true. We love one another madly; but what would you? She is a horse for work, a mastodon; and I — well, I cannot work, it is hateful to me. I can't be expected to climb upon her shoulders merely because she is a horse and loves me."

Cecilia laughed. "I think Hilda would get a bad bargain, myself, but if she wants it, that is her affair."

"And mine — somewhat mine —" the poet murmured.

"I don't see that it is yours. She is the man of the two; you are the weaker. If somebody does not look after you, you will be crushed out

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of existence. She's fit to do it, and you're unfit."

"I am not sure that I should mind being crushed out. Beauty and soul are always crushed out to-day —"

"Stuff! Hilda, if you want him, take him; but feed him on corned beef and cabbage, and get him over these nectar debauches."

"Has life in the country coarsened you, Cecilia? Has your soul shrivelled in the face of such a sky and such a vibrant sea?" the poet cried.

"No, it has n't shrivelled, it has grown. I used to talk that kind of claptrap about life and beauty, because it was the fashion in the Quarter; but things are real here, beauty lives in this place. Take him to the country, Hilda, and make him dig, and you 'll make a man of him."

Hilda stood up, her Amazonian body outlined for them against the sky.

"I don't want a big hulking man, there are plenty of them in the world for me to marry. I want Allwyn, I want to take care of him, and — and —"

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"I see! You want him because he's like a baby, and you can mother him."

"Cecilia, how material you have grown!" Allwyn objected.

"I hope I have. I want to be coarse, as an antidote to your ephemeral nonsense."

"Come on, Allwyn, let's take a walk, Nora is coming," Hilda remarked. "Nora wants him, too," she explained simply. They set off together, as Nora, Sally Waters, and Graves came up.

"So Hilda ran off with her chicken?" Nora laughed. "The way the poor hen clucks over him!"

"Are you playing chicken-hawk, Nora?"

"Sure! 'T is fun to see the Swede; she beats the Irish for a fight."

"Is she the Viking's daughter?" Saxton inquired.

"The same. She's smart as the devil, and works like him. Nothing on earth she can't get, if she tries for it. And what do ye think she wants?"

"Don't keep us in suspense!" Saxton begged.

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"She wants that dramin' ne'er-do-well, suckin' his poetic sugar-plum."

"Woman, woman, thy divine inconsistencies!"

"Who are you maltreating now, Nora?" Cecilia asked.

"There 's a vacancy in me heart, just now," she replied with a killing glance toward Saxton.

"May I put in an application for the place?" he asked her.

"An' he says he is n't Irish!" she laughed. "The really spectacular case of the Quarter just now is Scarlotti and Giron. She was to bring him out to-day, but he did n't appear."

"Giron — is that the fellow they want in the Crossroads case?"

"The Quarter is not exclusive, and he has a wit."

Anne and Richard and Mrs. O'Brien appeared, and announced that it was time to lay the table under the trees, so they all helped to get the luncheon spread. The others strolled in, a few at a time, and one o'clock found them sitting about, eating like so many hungry bears.

Afterwards the men lounged on the grass

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smoking, and the talk turned to the Quarter, exhibits, awards, prizes, the newcomers in the schools; and they talked of Soul, "as if it were a breakfast food," so Richard said. Gaines got started on the Rights of the People, and finally, in spite of Cecilia's efforts, they got to the Cross-roads murder, and the wrongs of Capital against Labor. They all believed Conrad to be a martyr, offering his life for the cause of Labor; and Gaines said that if he should be convicted of murder, Judge Carteret ought to be made to suffer for it.

"Judge Carteret does n't convict him, the jury does that; and you can take my word for it, Judge Peter Carteret would do what he thought right, if he had to pay for it a thousand times."

"I hear he's been offered ten thousand dollars by the Steel Trust to get the three men convicted, to give them a club to hold over the Unions."

"That's a lie, a false wicked lie," Cecilia cried.

"Bravo!" Gaines said, "our gracious hostess wishes to give the devil his due."

After that outburst the talk drifted to more impersonal subjects, and shortly Cecilia led them over to the big house to show them her studio

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and the murals. The discussion of the theme she had chosen, and her treatment of it, kept them busy for an hour or so, and then they broke up into groups again, and wandered into the woods.

Cecilia expected the Judge to appear any moment, so she excused herself from joining them. She wished the Judge might be detained and not come. Now that she had heard her old friends talk, she realized how useless it was to expect them to understand him. She remembered how unfair her own judgment of him had been, a few months before. How big his impersonality seemed beside the little passionate fury of these others! He was a builder, they were only destroyers.

She ran over to the Lodge to speak to Mrs. O'Brien, and when she came back to the big house she went to the library a moment; and at the door she stopped, struck motionless by the sight that met her eyes. Scarlotti was on a couch, and leaning toward her was a man, evidently the belated friend. As they became conscious of Cecilia, he rose and faced her.

"You! Not you!" Cecilia whispered.

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"What enthusiasm!" the man laughed.

Scarlotti stared in astonishment. Cecilia shuddered and covered her face with her hands, speaking low, as if to herself.

"I knew it was coming, I felt it all the time. Ever since I decided to do this thing I've known it was coming."

"You know Cecilia?" Scarlotti asked.

"Oh, yes, I know Cecilia."

"Giron —"

"Giron," Cecilia cried, "Giron! So you're the man they want in this trial. I might have known —"

"I am flattered that you place me so queeckly," he smiled.

"You shall not come back and spoil it all for me. You've no right to dog me, I'm free of you. I'll give you ten minutes to get away, and if you do not, I'll call the policeman from the village and give you up."

He shook his head and smiled.

"You know better zan zat. I should punish you too queeckly for zat. If I go to trial before zees devoted friend of yours, I will take some pains to tell what I know about you."

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"You can't do anything to hurt me."

"No? You think the esteemed Juge Carteret would like to hear —"

She stopped him with a gesture toward Scarlotti, and he laughed.

"Think better of ze veelage poleece."

"What has she got to do with you?" Scarlotti demanded.

"Nossing. An' ze less ze better. The situation has its possibeelities — beautiful girl, living on ze bounty of a Juge."

"Oh, you beast!"

"Another good reason occures to me, why ze honorable Juge would not care to have Giron brought to trial. A certain relationship —"

Cecilia seemed hypnotized by that evil smiling face.

"No, no, I promise not to tell what I know; I'll never speak of you, if you'll go away and let me alone. This is the only chance I've ever had to be happy, to live like a self-respecting human being. I have a little money; I'll give it to you gladly, if you'll only go away and let me be. Promise me you will not tell Judge Carteret."

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“For ze present, *mon enfant*, I am silent, but for ze future who can say? It ees in ze lap of ze gods! Scarlotti, shall we join ze rest? We will be meesed too much!”

He bowed to Cecilia, and led Scarlotti away. Cecilia trembled so, she could hardly stand. A servant came to the door to say the Judge wanted to speak to her on the 'phone. She scarcely knew her own voice when she spoke.

“That you, Cecilia?”

“Yes — yes.”

“How is the party going?”

“All right,” she managed to answer, through her chattering teeth.

“I am so sorry I cannot come out in time to meet these friends of yours; some important business has detained me.”

“I am so glad — so —” she began hysterically.

“What is it? The connection is poor.”

“I am sorry you cannot come — my friends will be disappointed.”

“Give them my regards. I 'll see you to-night and hear all about it. Good-bye.”

She hung up the receiver and leaned against

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the wall sobbing. At a sound she turned, and faced Giron, who stood in the door.

“Just to see there were no indiscretions wiz ze veelage poleece!” he smiled.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FLIGHT

AFTER dinner, the night of Cecilia's party, the Barretts, the Judge, and Saxton strolled over to the cabin to talk it all over. They found her inside, huddled over a fire, although the night outside was warm.

"Sh!" whispered Saxton, "she's weaving a spell! Where is the pot of steaming herbs, witch-woman?" he demanded, stalking in. The girl rose and held out her hands to them, as she answered his joking seriously.

"The pot is boiling in here, and the herbs are bitter!" she touched her head with her forefinger.

"Was n't the party a success? The rest of them say it was a most auspicious occasion," the Judge said.

"They seemed to have a good time; did n't you think they did?"

"I thought they had a wonderful time, dear.

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I was just telling the Judge how we found that poor little Sally Waters weeping in the vegetable garden because, she said, she had not met a vegetable since she left her home in the country."

"It was a real disappointment to me to miss it," said the Judge. "I usually forego parties with great fortitude, but this one interested me. You see, the Steel Trust people want me to get the mayor to dedicate the Parker Memorial at Crossroads, next week; and the only time he could give me was this afternoon at four. I told you, didn't I, that the Steel Trust had donated ten thousand dollars for this memorial? We had a meeting at the Union Club yesterday to complete the details.

"I am to make a speech, too, and present the Trust's check for ten thousand, as a token of their respect to Parker."

"You were all very good to me, and I appreciate it, even if I cannot say how much," Cecilia thanked them.

To their amazement she choked and could not go on, but went to the door and stood, looking out, trying to control herself. Anne went to

her, and threw her arm about her. "It's a pity if this little family of ours have to thank each other —"

Cecilia turned and said: "You've bound me to you, all of you, with a thousand cords of gratitude and affection. Do you remember the story of a woman without a soul, who wandered about in space, until Love came to help her in her search, and she found her soul? That's what you have done for me — helped me to find mine. Do you know what it would mean to me to go away, and lose you, or have you forget me?"

The tears were running down her face, and there was a gentle pathos about her that was heartbreaking. The Judge went and took her hands, speaking gently. "Why, Cecilia, what has come over you? What could happen to take you away from us? I know a girl who is very tired, and overwrought, and what she needs is a good night's sleep. She will never learn that giving all herself is wanton extravagance. So much less than all will satisfy people, child, and you can't afford to lavish yourself on everything, as you do."

She looked at him silently, the tears still running down her cheeks.

"Of course, she's tired. She's had a hard day and she ought to go to bed. It was a great success, Cecilia. Good-night."

"Thank you, Richard, for everything."

The Judge patted her hand silently, and Anne kissed her good-night.

Saxton dropped behind them and held out his hand. "Cecilia, dearest, I can't bear it when you're like this. Let me take care of you, let me cherish and protect you —"

"Please, please, I can't bear any more to-night."

"Coming, Sax?" called Richard.

"Coming."

He joined the others, and Cecilia stood in the doorway answering their good-nights.

"Good-night, dear, dear people!" she called after them.

"Until to-morrow!" the Judge answered her.

"Until to-morrow?" she whispered to herself, as she called Omar in and shut the door.

"Now, Cecilia Carné, you and I must think this out together to-night," she said, squatting

on the hearth, Omar beside her. "Omar, I knew it was all over to-day, when I told you and Bobby that my castle of happiness was about to fall. Bobby, dear blessed Bobby! Oh, I can't go, I just can't!"

For a long time she lay with her head on her arms, until Omar put his nose against her cheek to see if she was asleep.

"It's this way, old fellow," she explained to him, "I know him so well, I know Giron. He's a devil, he will live forever. See how young he looks, younger than I do! That's because he has no heart, no soul, no pity, only brain — brilliant, devising brain, with which to hurt and torture and destroy."

Omar growled understandingly.

"He's done his worst for me, and I'm not afraid of him any longer; but if he should hurt any of these dear people out here, I think I'd kill him. Imagine his coming here where Anne and Bobby are!"

She circled Omar with her arms and put her head down on his shaggy coat.

"Oh, it is n't fair, it is n't fair!"

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She threw her arm up in puny defiance of Omnipotence.

“You Godhead up there in the skies, why do you let it be? Some of us are born in the Pit and have no chance at all. We’re doomed at birth with the curse of our parents, or our grandparents, and there is no one to explain or help us! If I had met Judge Peter ten years ago —” She broke off and got to her feet stiffly, and paced back and forth, Omar beside her, his nose in her hand.

“He’s wanted in this trial; he’s back of the whole thing, I suppose, and Conrad and Gridley are his tools. If he should do Judge Peter any harm, or if the Judge should discover who I am —”

She dropped down beside the settle.

“Omar, I’ve got to go. Will you understand, even if the rest cannot, that I had to go for all their sakes, and that it nearly broke my heart?”

He whined and licked her face and hands. After a little she rose, put a few things into an old bag, and set the room in order.

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"Whether I ever come back again, or not, there will never be anything like this again, for me."

She wrote alone to Anne—

"Dear Anne:

"I have to go to town to-day. I hope to see you soon. Kiss Bobby for me, and will you look after Omar?

"CECILIA."

This she would leave at the Lodge as she passed. She sat long, trying to write the Judge, but no words came, so she gave it up.

As the sun came up red and fiery out of the lake, she spoke to Omar, took up her bag and started. Omar barked joyfully at prospect of an early run. When she had closed the door, she stood a moment looking all about the place, then with a sob she leaned against the door and kissed its wood. She knelt down and took Omar in her arms.

"Don't you forget me, old chum," she whispered to him. "On guard, sir!" she ordered, and ran away without looking back.

An hour and a half later she came into the Quarter and began her search. The early

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morning intensified the sordidness of the ugly streets, and it seemed to her that she could not endure it,—that she must turn and go back to the country with its sweet morning freshness.

She went first to Sally Waters's old lodging, and the woman in charge volunteered the information that nearly all the students of the Quarter had been to the ball the night before and were probably still there. Cecilia thanked her and paused on the sidewalk over her next move. Would Giron be venturesome enough to appear at so large an affair, even disguised? She decided that he would do just that dare-devil thing. She set out for the hall where the balls were held.

She remembered a time when she had considered this ball, modelled on the "Bal des Quartres Arts" of the French Latin Quarter, as the event of the winter. The doorkeeper would not admit her, because she was not in costume, but he remembered her and agreed to find Scarlotti and bring her to speak with Cecilia.

While he went on this errand, Cecilia looked on. It was broad daylight, and only a few were staying on, but the costumes, so gorgeous by

night, were dingy and tawdry enough now. Presently the door-man came back with Scarlotti. She greeted the newcomer without the least show of surprise.

"Hello, Cecilia, you're a trifle late."

"I have n't come to the ball. I have come to see if you knew where Giron is?"

"What do you want with him?"

"I want to pay him some money for a promise he is going to make me."

"You don't mean to hand him over?"

"No."

"Honest?"

"Honest. Is he here?"

"Yes. I'll call him!"

She waited until a black-robed priest came into view, and summoned him imperiously. He left his partner and came over to her.

"Ah, ze petite aristocrat. You honor us."

"When can I talk with you?"

"All ze way from her sylvan retreat to talk to me! We need have no secrets from *la belle* Scarlotti."

"I think you would not care to discuss the things I have to say, even with Scarlotti."

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He flashed a look at her, and then answered:

"You know Madame Gallica's? I am Signor Trelatti. My studio is No. 3. I shall be zere at twelve o'clock. Adieu, *mon enfant!*"

Cecilia nodded and left them, Scarlotti's laugh floating after her. She stopped a minute, and after some consideration she went to a bakery across the street, ordered a cup of coffee, and waited, near the window.

Half an hour later the last stragglers began to depart, long cloaks over their costumes. Scarlotti, Sally, and Giron finally appeared, and after a laughing colloquy on the corner they separated and went in opposite directions. Cecilia let Giron get well started and then followed him. He made a detour and came back to an old three-story house which had been remodelled into studio quarters for art students. She caught up with him on the top landing.

"So this is where Signor Trelatti lives?" she challenged him.

The door flew open and Scarlotti stood there.

"She caught you, did she? Well, come in."

They stepped inside, and she closed the door.

"Now, Cecilia, what do you want?" she asked.

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"I want to talk to this man."

"What about?"

"Private business, Scarlotti."

"His business is mine. Is n't it?" she challenged him.

He shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"Do you wish me to speak before her?"

"As you like."

"Are you in love with him?" Scarlotti demanded.

"No, thank God!"

"Keep out, that 's all I have to say. Now, go on with your story."

Giron lit a cigarette, offering the box to the others ceremoniously.

"What did you have to do with the killing of Parker?" Cecilia asked directly.

"It depend on ze paper you read. *Ze American* say I am ze eennocent but necessary scape-goat; ze *Tribune* say —"

"I did not come to joke about it. I want to know what part you played in it. I'll pay you to tell me the truth."

"You mean Judge Carteret will pay me?"

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"Judge Carteret knows nothing of my being here. I shall not see him until the trial is over and done with."

"What proof have I of zat? How do I know you are not getting evidence against me now? How do I know you will not give me away?"

"You 'll have to take my word for it."

He laughed.

"How much money have you?"

"I have a check for a thousand dollars."

She opened her bag and took it out.

"*Mon amie*, why do you interes' yourself so much in me, all of a sudden?"

"Don't flatter yourself. I 'm not interested in you. If you are responsible for that murder, I 'll give you up as sure as I stand here. But if you can convince me that it just happened, that you made that speech at Crossroads the night before the killing, without any idea of prompting Conrad to the crime, then I want you to take this money and go away. Did the Union hire you to do it?"

"I was not hired to do it."

"Will you promise me one thing?"

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“What?”

“If Conrad and Gridley are convicted, that you will not attack Judge Carteret?”

“Conrad weell not be convicted, nor Gridley either, *mon amie*, so why should I remove *Monsieur le Juge*?”

“How do you know they won’t be convicted?”

“Maybe you have heard zat your immaculate friend ees spoken of for Governor at ze nex’ election?”

“Well?”

“A mere suspicion, a hint of bribe-taking by heem, it would be fatal.”

“It could n’t be proved.”

“It does not need proving to be effective. Thanks to ze rottenness of municipal politics, an accusation ees as good as a charge.”

“Did you start the story about the Steel Trust offering Judge Carteret a bribe?”

“You get me queeckly. Yesterday eet was whisper at ze clubs, in ze cars, on ze street, to-day eet ees discuss openly; to-morrow eet will be a fact. The majority of peoples want to believe eet. To zees people ze conviction of Conrad and Gridley weell be proof positeef, as you

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say. Ze big meeddle class are for ze accused men. Carteret ees but human. Ze men get off wiz a light sentence, he please ze people, and denies all possibeelity of ze bribe story."

"The only flaw is that you reason that Judge Carteret is as base as you are. If Conrad and Gridley are found guilty, they will get the extreme sentence."

"Zat means political ruin for your friend."

"So much the more reason for his acting according to his own conscience. Will you make a compact with me?"

"What compact?"

"That you will stay here until the trial is over and then go away without seeing Judge Carteret?"

"Are you in love wiz zees man?"

"That is none of your affair. He is the only true friend I have ever had. I'd kill you rather than have any harm come to him through me, or any one connected with me."

"What makes you teenk I want to do him harm?"

"You've had a grudge since the De Marcy case."

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His face went white.

"You need n't be afraid I'll tell, unless you fail me now."

"What is this De Marcy case?" Scarlotti asked.

"Ask Cecilia, I do not know. Run back to ze country, and grow ze potato, *mon enfant*; detective work ees not your forte."

"Do you mean to appear in this trial at all?"

"I have take some pains not to," he laughed.

"Here is my offer. Scarlotti, can you let me have a bed in the kitchenette or the closet?"

"Why?"

"I will stay here until after the trial is over, if you will stay too. The day it is finished, I give you this check, and you will get away from Chicago. I'll put the money here in this bowl, as token of good faith."

"Angel Scarlotti, you permeet zees invasion?"

"If you won't sit around and growl at one another all day."

"Then eet ees agreed. I look forward to two, maybe three days in such company, wiz delight. An' now, *mes amis*, we say *bonne nuit* for a lit-

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tle, eh? We will make a night of zees day, since we made day of ze night. *Bon nuit!*"

He disappeared into the tiny adjoining room and Cecilia and Scarlotti stretched out on couches in the studio. In a moment Scarlotti was heavily asleep, but Cecilia turned restlessly, her thoughts back at Hillcrest.

"Oh, little cabin, little cabin, how far away you seem! The Judge is opening his paper at the breakfast table, now, and Anne is kissing Bobby for me!"

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DE MARCY CASE

SOME ten years before the events in this story, there had been an ugly case aired in the papers and tried before Judge Carteret, in which two Frenchmen had figured. One was a man named De Marcy and the other Devaux. The latter had a beautiful wife. At the time it created a stir, because the principals in the affair were people of refinement and education, and the *protégés* of the most fashionable society of the city.

The man Devaux, armed with the most irreproachable letters to the French Consul, had arrived in Chicago with his beautiful wife, and had organized clubs among the rich fashionables, for the purpose of reading French plays. He and his wife were the fad of the season, for he was a man of ability and personal charm, and his wife's beauty was undeniable. They took a

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house in a "smart" neighborhood, where they received the most exclusive people in town.

The second season of their stay, Devaux organized a small French theatre, backed by his rich patrons, and inaugurated a popular season of amateur performances of French drama. He was a clever actor, and his wife had some histrionic ability, so they got together quite a creditable organization.

In this company of players was one De Marcy, who never really extended the hand of fellowship to his countryman. Devaux tried in various ways to win the man over, and finally called upon Madame Devaux to use her arts. Subsequently De Marcy became a constant visitor in the Devaux household. If his devotion to Madame Devaux was a trifle marked, it never overstepped the bounds of discretion.

Things were going on in apparent amiability and harmony, when the fashionable world was horrified by the headlines in the morning papers, which detailed the shooting of De Marcy by Devaux, in the Devaux drawing-room.

It was the finest kind of thriller for the newspapers, and they made the most of it. They

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described the drawing-room (with cuts) in which the shooting took place; they described Devaux and his wife standing over the dead man; they went over the story Devaux told the servants and the night watchman, when they arrived on the scene; they rehearsed the steps in the career of the Frenchman and his wife, their popularity in society, their ability as actors, and Devaux's cleverness in organizing the Amateur French Company. There were full-page pictures of Madame Devaux in roles in which De Marcy played her lover. There was an account of dinners given by them, and the names of their guests were printed.

Devaux made no attempt to escape, and when the case came to trial before Judge Carteret, there were many surprises for the fashionable patrons of the accused. Devaux was finally acquitted on the ground of "the unwritten law," upon the testimony of his wife, who swore that her husband came to her rescue, in answer to her call, and shot De Marcy just in time to save his own honor and her good name.

After the acquittal, because of the publicity of the trial, society lost interest in its late favorites, and Devaux was forced to abandon the

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French theatre scheme. In spite of the De Marcy affair he succeeded in getting a clerical position in the employ of the French Consul, and they stayed on in semi-retirement.

About a year later the Devaux woman came to Judge Carteret and told him that her entire testimony in regard to the murder of De Marcy was false. She confessed that De Marcy had learned certain damaging facts in regard to Devaux, and that he had come to the house the night of the shooting, to threaten to tell what he knew, unless they would give up the French theatre and go away.

The woman swore she had no part in the discussion, but that she heard it all from the next room. The argument grew into a quarrel, and Devaux drew on De Marcy and shot him. She rushed into the room, a few moments before the servants arrived, and on the spur of the moment she told the story of Devaux coming to her rescue, which she later swore to in the trial.

Now she wanted to get Devaux into as much trouble as possible. They had quarrelled, and she intended to divorce him. She told the Judge she would go before a jury with her story, and that Devaux was a devil incarnate.

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Carteret convinced himself that this time she was telling the truth, so he advised her to take her story to an attorney and confess to perjury in the previous trial. He explained that as long as Devaux was employed in the French Consul's office, he could not be tried by a United States court; but he offered to drop a hint to the French Consul, which would bring about his dismissal. This she agreed to, and subsequently the Judge had a talk with the French Consul.

Devaux promptly disappeared, before his wife could do anything in the matter, and she angrily accused Judge Carteret of having warned him. The Consul was called on and reported his conversation with Devaux. He had merely told the man that Judge Carteret had put him in possession of facts which made it impossible for him to continue longer in the government employ. Devaux took it calmly, handed in his resignation, and departed.

As far as Judge Carteret knew, they never found any trace of Devaux, the woman disappeared, and the whole affair was buried and forgotten.

CHAPTER XXIV

AT THE STUDIO

IN the days that followed, Cecilia had ample opportunity to measure the long way she had travelled since the old days in the Quarter. She found it impossible to drop back into the life, to take up the wonted relationships. Scarlotti's studio had always been the lounging place of the neighborhood, and they came and went in their old erratic ways, while Cecilia considered them from afar, and wondered at herself and them.

The time had been when she thrilled at Gaines's oratory, gave passionate belief to Allwyn's social theories, and upheld Scarlotti and Hilda in their "advanced idea"; but now they all seemed to her like ants, trying to build the same house, but running about in distracted indirection.

"You are not one of us any longer," Arnold Gaines challenged her.

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"I can scarcely say. I see you all from a new angle. I think your plans are too radical, Arnold. You want to tear down the whole structure, and sweep away the remains. I think you must make it over bit by bit, building up, as you tear down." She smiled to find herself using the Judge's very words.

"That would take centuries," he protested.

"Well, it has taken centuries to build what we have. Surely some of it must be of value."

They came and went, argued and philosophized, and through it all Giron sat and listened and smiled. Cecilia found herself fascinated by his curious personality, which she appraised and judged for the first time.

His was a strange, distorted nature, conceived of hate and born of unrighteousness. His deity seemed to be the god of malevolence. He needed no grudge against a man to wish him harm; it was a passion with him to plot destruction. And for this purpose he had been given a mind brilliant, resourceful, malicious. His philosophy, clearly worked out and often wittily expressed, was one of pessimism and hopelessness. All men and women were endowed with

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a preponderance of base instincts, which they spent their lives in cultivating. Love, loyalty, purity, and honor he distorted into passion, self-interest, baseness, and hypocrisy. He defended his point of view and this monstrous code with brilliant sophistry.

Cecilia understood him at last. She saw the motive and the incentive in much of the evil that she knew of him. She measured him with the Judge and Richard, and feared that her very ability to understand him was a slight upon herself.

He, on his part, treated her with an amused tolerance. They talked of books, of music, of painting, never of personal things. He got some painting things together for her and watched her work, with obvious satisfaction. He came and stood behind her one evening as she worked.

“What masterpiece now, at ze expense of eyes?”

“It may interest you; it is a study of you.”

“Of me? I am flattered.” He bowed.

“You need not be. This is your soul as you have shaped it and set its mark on your face.”

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He took the sketch to the light and studied it closely for a long time, grunting in his throat over it.

"This ees me, as you see me? It ees masterly," he cried, "and monstrous. Shall you call eet *Giron*?"

"I shall call it *The Malefactor*."

"I thank you. A pretty compliment!"

"Compliment?"

"Certainly. I find my amusement in doing my fellow-men injuries, just as your sham goody-goodies please themselves by doing good. You assure me zat I am a success: that ees a compliment."

"Are you never sorry?" she asked curiously. He laughed.

"Sorry? I count upon my rosary, as a good Catholic does his beads, all ze men and women I have tumbled from high pedestals, and each one makes me a little more even wiz life."

Scarloti gathered up her brushes and began to clean her palette.

"That 's all I 'm going to do on that," she said, yawning.

Giron went and looked at her work.

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"Good, very good. You could go far, you two, and instead you make fools of yourselves over worthless men."

"Somebody has to work," said Scarlotti; "you won't."

"*Mon amie*, I do not find fault wiz ze generosity which makes you so divine. I only say you are a fool to care for any man enough to waste ze time. You should paint night an' day an' make a great name for yourself."

"Great name? What have you when you've got it?" demanded Scarlotti. "You can't love a great name, you can't kiss it and hold it close, can you? You can't talk to it, and quarrel with it, and die for the lack of it!"

Giron laughed.

"It ees devil's work to give great gifts like yours to a woman, and zen damn her wiz ze emotions an' passions of ze mere woman animal."

"I can't paint unless I love," Scarlotti said.

"Oh, Scarlotti, I wish you could love somebody big and fine and worthy of you," cried Cecilia.

"Not zees beast of a Giron, eh?"

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"I don't want any of your big fine ones — what use could they have for me? I want to love somebody just like me, some crazy good-for-nothing I have to help."

"It ees inevitable she should love me!"

"Yes, it's inevitable; that's it," she said grimly.

"Nothing but misery and unhappiness can come to you from such a love," Cecilia protested.

"All right! I'll pay, but I love when and where I will."

"All ze great women of history have said ze same."

"I've got to go and get some food if we eat to-night. Do you two want to come along?"

"I await your pleasure, *mon enfant!*" Giron taunted Cecilia.

"We may as well go," she said.

It was Saturday night, and the dingy street in which they lived had taken on a rakish air. The housewives of the district were all out for their Sunday marketing, and as they turned into Halsted Street, Giron exclaimed, "How long will eet take zees America to melt down an'

assimilate zees mass? Not an American — such a *pot-pourri* of races.”

“America means nothing to most of them, except a place where bread and butter comes easier, and meat once a week,” said Scarlotti.

“How can you say that, Scarlotti? America means an ideal, a chance, a future.”

“Bah! America, *mon enfant*, means money.”

They elbowed their way through the chattering crowd. Fat Jewish women, with shawls over their heads and big baskets on their arms, bargained with dealers and chatted with their friends. Children ran in and out, always under foot, occasionally calling forth torrents of abuse from women they jostled. The youths stood in groups on the corners and watched the young girls saunter by, arm in arm, making eyes. The fishman cried his wares, and the push-cart men, who lined the curb, offered in raucous tones to close out at unheard-of prices. It was gay, care-free, sociable.

“You have to go away from the Quarter to really see it. It seems very picturesque and peaceful and neighborly,” Cecilia said.

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"Wait till midnight, when they 're all drunk," laughed Scarlotti.

"I wonder how long eet will take zees peaceful pigs to fin' out zeir power?"

"Power to what end?" Cecilia asked.

"To take what zey need. How long will zey haggle and barter wiz a few cents, when zere are hundreds of thousands of dollars to be had for ze taking."

"What would they do with it, if they took it? You have to teach them the responsibility of it first. It would only mean more drink for Saturday night to them, now."

"Who limits ze vices of your rich? Who teaches to zem ze responsibility of wealth?"

"Wait here, while I get the meat," Scarlotti ordered, and left them on the curb.

"America, she ees *tres amusante*, ze country of ze free, untrammelled by kings an' czars! But she builds up for herself a class of kings wiz more power zan all ze crowned heads of Europe. She begets a *monstre*, wiz ze powers of deity, almost, an' zen zees infant America she say, '*Mon Dieu!* we must tame zees *monstre*;

we mus' make him gentle, not to bite!' Eet ees to laugh!"

He pointed to the surging mass about them.

"Some day zees pigs will rise an' tame ze *monstre*."

Scarlotti appeared with her arms full of bundles.

"It's a mob to-night, is n't it? Let's get rid of this stuff and go over to Hull House for a while, and get something to eat at the coffee house."

"But yes, an' later, I invite you to ze real dissipation of ze Quarter, ze nickel theatre," laughed Giron.

They delivered their marketing and started toward Hull House.

"What's the bundle?" asked Cecilia.

"A little package of tea for Madame Polaski. I want to stop just a minute, if you don't mind," Scarlotti said.

Presently she led the way up the dark stairway of a two-story cottage and tapped on a door. It was opened cautiously, and a streak of light struck across them.

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"Scarlotti and friends to see you, Madame."

The door was thrown open, and the fat old Russian woman extended both hands to them.

"Ach, Scarlotti! Velcome. Ach! *Commen Sie herein — ja!*"

"Just a minute! I came to bring you a present."

They entered the tiny room, which was crowded with the four of them. The light of one dirty lamp threw grotesque shadows over the old woman and the tables of copper and brass which composed her wares. She was volubly grateful for the gift, and insisted on their having tea and cake; but they refused and groped their way down the dark stairway into the street.

"Bah!" said Giron, shaking himself.

"You need n't 'bah' at Madame Polaski. She's the kindest, most hospitable old soul in the Quarter. She's done lots of things for me. And you talk about being a democrat!" Scarlotti jeered at him.

"I am a democrat — in theory!"

They made their way to Hull House in silence.

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"Arnold Gaines has a club of boys. Shall we go up?"

"Coffee house first; I 'm hungry," Giron answered.

On the way through the hall they came upon the head of the house, who stopped to greet them.

"I have not seen you here before, I think," she said to Giron.

"No, Madame."

Something in his tone attracted her attention.

"You are not in sympathy with our work, perhaps?"

"You begin at ze wrong end, I should say."

"The wrong end?"

"But yes. Start your settlement house among ze rich, on ze North Shore Drive. It ees zere you will get results."

"Possibly. But these people must be taught to live."

"Not so important as zose people on ze North Shore. Zees people down here, zey have ze rational business of life, of getting bread; ze rich have no business at all. It will take you four generations down here, before you can teach zees

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people how to change conditions; but your rich, zey have ze power, ze intelligence — why not teach zem how to use eet?”

“We are teaching them all the time.”

“Surreptitiously! You have not ze courage to give zem settlement houses.”

The little mother of the poor smiled at him.

“You were on your way to the coffee house? I’ll join you for a moment. . . . Whom would you send to do this missionary work among the rich, Signor?” she asked him when they were seated.

“Ze poor. Zey can teach true courtesy, respect for ze rights of others, ze satisfaction of a good day’s work.”

“That’s the craziest idea I ever heard,” Scarlotti interposed. “Do you suppose the rich would put up with us in their houses, trying to teach them things?”

“Why not, if we must put up wiz zem down here?”

“Try it out, Trelatti. Open a settlement on the North Shore,” laughed the Hull House Lady. “We promise to coöperate with you in

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every way. I must go now. I've a dozen people waiting to see me. Come in again and talk it over."

"Poor foolish Jeanne D'Arc," Giron smiled after her.

They watched the people about them in silence for a little, and all at once Cecilia exclaimed and half rose from her chair. The other two followed her glance toward the door, where a man had just entered. At the same instant he saw them and plunged through the crowd toward them.

"Cecilia Carné —" he cried, his hands out.

"Mr. Graves," she faltered.

"So I've found you at last. Why did you run away? Where on earth have you been?"

"Do you remember Mr. Graves, Scarlotti? Mr. Giron, Mr. Graves," she said calmly.

He bowed to the others and turned to her again.

"They are so upset about you at Hillcrest. The Judge wanted to come in with me to-night and hunt for you. Why didn't you send us some address?"

"Since when have I been accountable to Hillcrest for my actions? I came in to spend some time with my friends."

"We also have some interest in her actions, Monsieur," said Giron suavely, and the younger man flushed angrily.

"You might have sent word. Anne thinks some dreadful thing has happened to you."

"I will send it now, by you. Will you tell them that I am well, and that I shall stay a few days longer with my friends?"

"You are coming back?"

"Yes, maybe — I —"

He studied her face, puzzled at her manner, so composed and yet so perturbed.

"Won't you sit down?" Scarlotti suggested.

"No, no, thank you, I must go. Miss Scarlotti, may I come and see you and Miss Carné?" he asked eagerly.

"No, if you please," said Cecilia quickly.

"She tires of ze country, Monsieur; she ees a city product, our Cecilia. I do not wonder. I abhor ze country, so green, so blue, so expected! An' ze quiet — *Mon Dieu!* ze quiet would drive me mad!"

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"It is most interesting to hear your views," said Saxton curtly. Giron laughed. "Cecilia, is there anything I can do for you?" Graves added boldly.

She looked directly at him.

"Take good care of all of them for me, the Barretts and dear Judge Carteret, until I get back."

He felt that there was something significant in her words, and yet her manner baffled him.

"I will, indeed I will."

"We must go," said Cecilia, half rising.

"I have not finish yet," Giron objected.

"Let me take you home, if you are tired," Graves said.

"*Merci!* she will wait for me," Giron said pleasantly.

"Good-night, Mr. Graves. Give them all my love," Cecilia interrupted.

He took her cold hand, bowed to the others and left without a word.

"So-so-so, a lovair comes upon ze scene. You handle ze situation well, *mon enfant*, considering all ze difficulties."

CHAPTER XXV

THE CLIMAX

IN the enforced intimacy of Scarlotti's tiny three rooms a new problem began to present itself to Cecilia, in the relations of Scarlotti and Giron. It was obvious from the fervor with which Scarlotti worked that she was the financial head of the combination, while Giron was in hiding. The strange woman never worked except when necessity beat upon the studio door.

The fact that she had befriended Giron was nothing new or alarming, for there was almost always some pensioner upon her bounty, either men or girls. She worked for them as a mother would for her needy children, if they needed food; and she fed them on her joyous optimism, if they needed courage. To serve somebody, that was Scarlotti's dissipation, and she refused a word of thanks. So the situation itself was not unusual; and yet Cecilia felt that it had one

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alarming possibility — that Scarlotti might really love Giron. It was too hateful to think of the girl's fine worth being so desecrated. Cecilia loved and admired her too well not to give her a word of warning, and the chance was not long in coming.

It was the day that the case of the People *versus* Conrad was expected to go to the jury. Cecilia had been awake at dawn after a restless night, her thoughts hovering about the Judge. That this day would mark the end of a long strain for all of them, she tried to comfort herself, to quiet a nervous terror that possessed her. Scarlotti seemed restless too; so they rose early and had their breakfast, tiptoeing about, not to awaken Giron, in the tiny room next to the kitchen.

Afterwards when Scarlotti sat at her work and Cecilia wandered about, too anxious to paint, Scarlotti looked up at her inquiringly.

"What is it, Cecilia?"

"Nervous, I suppose. Can't seem to settle down."

"Might as well tell me and get it off your mind."

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"I should n't know where to begin, Scarlotti."

"You 're in love, are n't you?"

"No, no, certainly not."

"Oh, yes, you are! I knew it the minute I saw your face the other night when you saw him."

"Saw him?"

"Yes, Mr. Graves, over at the coffee house."

Cecilia smiled gravely.

"You 're wrong. It is not —"

"My dear, I know something about love myself, so you can't deceive me."

"You, Scarlotti? And you always boasted that your heart was a stone!"

"I was wrong. It is a red-hot ball of flame, and it will burn me up if I don't get some peace pretty soon."

"Is it somebody I know, Scarlotti?"

"It is Giron," she answered simply.

"Oh, no, Scarlotti! not Giron," Cecilia cried. Scarlotti turned on her.

"Why not?" she demanded.

"He 's such a miserable beast; he 's not worthy of you."

"Look here! I 've asked no questions of him,

nor of you, but I've lived in hell ever since you've been here, and I can't stand it any longer! What do you know about him?"

"Nothing good, nor decent."

"I don't care about that. I mean, what is he to you? Was he ever your lover?"

Cecilia made a motion of horror, then suddenly she leaned over Scarlotti and whispered in her ear. She listened stupefied, and then tears began to trickle down her face, and in a second she was racked with sobs.

"God! what I've endured these days!" she sobbed.

"Scarlotti, is it as bad as that?"

"Bad? Why, I've gotten up in the night and stood over you, determined to kill you rather than endure it any longer."

"My dear, I would have told you, only I was so ashamed," Cecilia said, holding her close. "You must listen to me! It cannot be; you must not let yourself love him, Scarlotti,—he's heartless."

"What do I care? Do you expect me to pick out a man because he's good, and say, 'Now, heart, we'll love him'? That is n't the way it

happens. I looked into Giron's eyes and knew I'd die for him. That's all."

"Has he told you that he loves you?"

"Not in so many words."

"Many women have eaten their hearts out for him."

"I don't care!"

"He has murder on his soul."

"I don't care. I don't care what he is, or what he's done — I love him, and that's all there is to it."

"But I can't stand by and see you condemn yourself to this misery. Let me tell you what he has done."

The door opened and Giron came in, bowing. Cecilia turned away, as if to leave them.

"Go on wiz ze list of charges. Pray, do not let me interrupt. Maybe I can add piquant details."

"You were listening?" Cecilia demanded.

"Ze walls are paper — why not?"

"I might have known your ear would be at the keyhole," she flung at him.

His face grew white, and he strode to Cecilia, his hands gripping and ungrIPPING.

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“How long do you imagine I am going to endure you, eh? Do you believe I am going to let you interfere wiz my plans — my life? But no! You get in my way, and you suffer! Why don’t you stay in ze country? Why do you come and hunt me out? God! I thought I was rid of you years ago, you brat!”

“Giron!” Scarlotti protested, but he did not hear her. His rage rose in tide and swept him into a torrent of French abuse and gutter-talk. Cecilia felt her control slipping away. She knew the stifling desire of the beast before it springs upon the prey. All her heritage from an uncontrolled ancestry cried out in her to take this man’s hated life.

“You thing! You thing! Can God live and hear you?”

All at once Giron’s passion left him. His face twisted into a mockery of a smile. He looked at Cecilia and laughed. Then without a word he turned to where Scarlotti stood, took her in his arms, and kissed her passionately upon the mouth. “I love you! I love you!” he said to her, and she clung to him desperately.

He put her aside and went and took some-

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thing from a chest of drawers, went into his room, and came out with his hat and gloves.

"Where are you going?" Cecilia asked him.

"*Addio, Scarlotti mia,*" he said, ignoring the other.

The two women stood a moment facing one another.

"We must follow him! There's no telling what he may do."

"It's all your fault; you made him so furious."

"Never mind. We must get the police."

Scarlotti seized Cecilia by the arm. "You'll do nothing of the sort. You keep your hands off him, do you hear?"

Cecilia pushed her away and ran downstairs, and toward a car that would take her to the Court House.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE TRIAL

IT was with the greatest difficulty that Cecilia and Scarlotti succeeded in getting into the court room, for it was crowded to suffocation when they arrived. So many interests of Capital and Labor, Trust and Union, were involved in the case that there were people enough to fill the room, who were vitally interested, besides all the court hangers-on and curiosity-seekers who infest court rooms during murder trials.

Cecilia gave a hurried glance about as she sat down at the back of the room. Her heart beat fast at sight of Judge Carteret, and she searched his face eagerly for signs of recognition, but he had not noticed their entrance.

She scanned the faces of the jurymen, and wondered whether they dreaded the responsibility of their verdict to-day, which would send

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these men on to imprisonment for life, or possibly to death. She looked closely at the officers of the court, the attorneys, the court reporters. They were all new to her, for she knew nothing of the machinery of the law. She was impressed by the solemnity of all their faces; otherwise it seemed a cheerful, busy place.

The people about her turned eager, interested, or bored faces toward the attorney for the defence, who was making his final summing up. She could not see Giron anywhere, and she asked Scarlotti in a whisper if she saw him. She tried to listen to the attorney who was reaching his climax, but she could not. Her mind was whirling about one question—Where was Giron? What was he planning to do? She determined that if he came into the room, she would warn Judge Carteret against him. She sat on the edge of her chair, straining every nerve.

Presently the Judge began to speak and she tried to fix her attention on what he was saying, but she heard only his opening words:

“The Court instructs the jury, as a matter of law, that if they believe from the evidence in

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this case, that the defendants, or any of them, conspired and agreed together, or with others, to overthrow the law by force, or to resist the officers of the law; and if they further believe, in pursuance of such conspiracy and induced by such advice and encouragement, that murder was committed, then all of such conspirators are guilty of murder, whether the person who perpetrated such murder be identified or not."

Maybe Giron was guilty of murder too, along with the others!

"If these defendants or any of them conspired together to excite the people, or classes of people, of the city of Crossroads to sedition, tumult, or riot, to the use of deadly weapons, and to take the life of other persons, as a means to carry out their designs and purposes; and if in pursuance of such conspiracy and the furtherance of its objects, any of the persons so conspiring, publicly, by print or speech, advised or encouraged the commission of murder, without designating time, place, or condition at which it should be done; and if in furtherance of the common object, a shot was fired by a member of such conspiracy at the time when William

Parker was killed, then such defendants as the jury believes from evidence beyond reasonable doubt to have been parties to this conspiracy, are guilty of murder, whether present at the killing or not, and whether the identity of the person firing the shot be established or not."

During the Judge's instructions to the jury the faces of the men on trial whitened and grew taut, as if the screws were being tightened. The counsel for the defence looked grave.

The Judge's sonorous voice rolled on indefinitely, making only a blurred impression on Cecilia's mind. She was like one drowning, before the last sinking. The whole of her life flashed by her — sordid childhood, neglected girlhood, the blissful period at Hillcrest — it swept by like a panorama up to this final moment. She thought she had climbed away from her past and built herself a refuge, but she was mistaken. The past had risen up to claim her, to drag her down again, and she cried out in her heart that she would sink back without a protest, if only these people whom she loved and who loved her might not come to harm through her.

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After what seemed hours of agonized waiting, the Judge closed his instructions to the jury, and they rose to go out, when the disturbance that Cecilia waited for came. After some colloquy with the doorkeeper, which attracted general attention, Giron sauntered in, with the strut of an actor who appreciates a good entrance. Cecilia sprang up but Scarlotti pulled her back into her seat.

Giron stood easily facing the Judge and the jurymen, who stood by their chairs.

"Gentlemen of ze jury, I understan' one Gaston Giron ees wanted on zees trial. I am Giron."

The court bailiff rapped for order.

"Sheriff, take this man into custody."

The Judge's calm manner contrasted vividly with the tense excitement into which this interruption had thrown the court room.

"Juge Carteret ees afraid to let me speak! He has used every means to keep me out of zees trial, an' now he will not let you hear me!" Giron cried excitedly.

"At the proper time you will have the opportunity to be heard."

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The audience scarcely breathed, and the Judge's voice bit the silence sharply. The jurymen stood irresolutely not knowing what to do. At this point the attorney for the prisoners arose, and after carefully polishing his glasses, began to address the Court in measured tones. Nothing in his manner indicated the desperation to which the events of the trial and the fatal instructions given by the Judge, had driven him. There was not a tremor to show that he was clutching at a straw.

"May it please the Court, it has been the feeling of my clients since the outset that they were not receiving, and could not at this time receive, a fair trial. It is not necessary to comment on the public excitement caused by the events that made this trial inevitable, nor upon the newspaper clamor, which somehow manages to make itself felt, nor upon the public prejudice with which the air has seemed charged. It is enough to say that the events of this day indicate that the prisoners at the bar are laboring under a greater load — the prejudice of the Court."

The words were thrown out like an exploding

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bomb. The speaker was grazing the edge of contempt with every word, and he picked his way carefully, fully alive to his danger.

"Is this Court prejudiced? It is not for me to say. The Court has been so accused informally and properly, and in such a way as to subject the accuser to punishment for contempt. Nevertheless it is due my clients that the truth be known whatever that truth is."

He sat down apparently without emotion or further interest in the matter. He had scored his point. If the case rested there, a lingering doubt in the mind of some jurymen might cause him to hold out against conviction. That would insure victory for the defence.

"Let this witness be sworn," said the Court.

The prosecuting attorney was on his feet instantly, vehemently and foolishly objecting.

"Objection overruled. You may proceed, Mr. Counsellor."

"It is not my province; it is for the Court," insisted the attorney for the defence.

"It is out of the usual order of things, but is within the jurisdiction of the Court, on the mo-

tion of the accused, to order these charges aired here and now. I direct the prosecuting attorney to find out what this man has to say."

"Oh, don't let him! don't!" moaned Cecilia, and the bailiff rapped sharply for order.

Giron was sworn in, and the attorney continued.

"Your name is Giron? Gaston Giron?"

"I am so called, but yes, Monsieur."

"You are an American citizen?"

"I am citizen of France."

"How long have you been in this country?"

"Eleven years."

"What is your vocation?"

"Painter, writer, socialist, Unionist — what you will!"

"Have you at any time been employed by labor unions as an agitator?"

"Agitator? I make speeches for ze Union now and again."

Here the Judge interrupted.

"Mr. Attorney, the matter of this man's guilt or innocence in regard to the Parker murder will be established at another time. Proceed to his accusations against this Court."

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"You made certain statements against the personal honor of Judge Carteret. Are you prepared to prove them to be true?"

"I am, if you let me speak my own way."

"Proceed."

"I make speech at Crossroads ze night before Parker was killed, but I was not zere ze day of ze shooting. I hear zere is a warrant out for me, so I go into hiding. I hear my comrade Conrad ees to stan' trial before zees Judge Carteret. I know heem, I have one large grudge myself against heem; so I say, 'I go keel zees man for ze cause of Labor!' So I go to ze house of Monsieur Barrett, where ze young Barrett an' Monsieur le Juge are alone one night. Ze Juge he invite me to supper wiz zem, I accept. We talk a long time."

"Judge Carteret knew you were Giron?"

"I tell him when I go in."

"He made no attempt to take you into custody, or call for the police?"

Giron shrugged his shoulders.

"No, I am armed. I have so pleasant a time I decide eet ees not well to kill so charming a host, so I say good-night and go."

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"He made no effort to detain you?"

"He does not want me to appear in ze case."

"What motive can Judge Carteret have for keeping you out of court, when you are wanted in this murder?"

"Ze Steel Trust, I am told, offair Judge Carteret ten thousan' dollair to get zees men convicted, so ze Trust can use eet as a club over ze Union."

A whisper ran over the audience, cut short by a rap of the gavel.

"You can prove that?"

Again the whisper and the sharp rap.

"I see Meester Milton, ze President of ze Trust, and Meester Orkeney, ze manager, offer Judge Carteret ze money."

"Where were you when you saw that?"

"In a private dining-room of ze Union Club. I was a waiter zere. Meester Milton, Meester Orkeney, and Judge Carteret come in about four o'clock zat day."

"What day?"

"August twenty-fourth."

"The day of my picnic, Scarlotti," Cecilia whispered.

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“Zey order three highballs. When I come back I hear Meester Milton say, ‘Juge Carteret, ze directors have decided on ten thousan’ dollair.’

“ ‘That ees mos’ generous,’ ze Juge say.

“ ‘We can rely on you; so if you undertake zees matter for us, we be mos’ grateful.’

“ ‘I appreciate ze action of your committee in zees affair, gentlemen, and I shall try to arrange it.’

“Zen Mr. Milton give ze Juge a check, and he laughed.

“ ‘Better take a receipt, Milton,’ he said.”

“Did any one else overhear this conversation?”

“No.”

All eyes were turned toward the Judge, who sat quietly under their challenge. He listened to Giron as quietly as he would to any man giving testimony on the most indifferent subject.

“Why do you think this affair of the check has any bearing on Judge Carteret’s desire to keep you out of court?”

“Ze Juge recognize me when he rise to go out.”

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The Judge leaned forward at this, in evident surprise.

"He recognized you a second time, and yet made no move to take you into custody?"

"Yes. Ze nex' day he send a messenger to me an' offer me one thousan' dollair to get out of ze jurisdiction of zees court."

"You can prove that?"

"Here ees ze check."

An exclamation of surprise ran around the room, as the Frenchman handed the attorney a slip of blue paper. After examining it carefully, the attorney said:

"This check is not made out to you."

"It ees made out to ze messenger."

"It is drawn to a woman — Cecilia Carné. Who is she?"

"She ees ze mistress of Judge Carteret."

The bailiff's gavel dropped thunderingly, and the Judge leaned toward Giron, his judicial calm broken through at last, and all that was primitive in the man was bared in his face. Before any one could speak, a voice at the back of the room answered Giron.

"It is a lie, all of it, from beginning to end!"

The crowd turned, as one man, toward the place from which the interruption came, so they missed the horror and concern upon the Judge's face. Cecilia looked only at him. She came toward him quickly, unconscious of the people who made way for her. Scarlotti followed her to the front of the room, where they faced Giron.

"The bailiff will preserve order," said the Judge. "Mr. Prosecuting Attorney, proceed with this witness."

"You must listen to me," Cecilia said to the jurymen, "indeed you must listen. I am Cecilia Carné, and I have a right to defend myself, and to tell what I know of this man."

The Judge considered a moment.

"If there is no objection, let the witness be sworn," he said finally.

"I object, on the ground that it is prejudicial to the rights of my clients."

It was obvious that such an objection from the defence, after the inquiry had been started on their motion, was unfair. The Prosecuting Attorney at once made the point, but it was overruled by the Court.

"If the counsel thinks it will prejudice the rights of his clients, I will sustain his objection."

This was exactly what the chief counsel had not expected. He assumed that self-preservation, being the first law and the usual rule, was always followed. It seemed that here was an exception; so he lamely withdrew his objection, and the witness was sworn.

"You are Cecilia Carné?" the attorney began.

"Yes."

"You know this man Giron?"

"He is my father."

There was an instant buzz in the room, quieted by the sharp rapping of the gavel.

"You are married?"

"No."

"He does not go by his own name, then?"

"His real name is Gaston Giron Carné. He has gone by many names. He was once called Devaux."

The Judge started at the name. The whole thread of connection was plain to his mind.

"The Devaux who figured in the De Marcy case?"

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"At your service, Monsieur," smiled Giron.

"Miss Carné, did you live with your father at the time of the De Marcy trial?"

"No."

"Your mother lived with him at that time?"

"Yes."

"She was French?"

"No; Spanish."

"How long have you known Judge Carteret?"

"About five months."

"How did you come to know him?"

"I went out to the country, up the Lake Shore, and took possession of an empty cabin near his home. I have been living there since."

"As Judge Carteret's guest?"

"No. I was there when he came out. I don't know who owns it."

"Did you know the Judge before you went to the North Shore?"

"No, I never saw him until then."

"What means of support have you?"

"I am a painter."

"Did Judge Carteret send you to ask Giron to leave the city?"

"He did not."

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"Did he know that you were Giron's daughter?"

"No."

"Did he give you a check for one thousand dollars to be used as a bribe with Giron?"

"He did not."

"How did you come into possession of the Judge's check for that amount?"

The silence in the room was breathless.

"Judge Carteret gave me the check two months ago in payment for a mural decoration I am making in his library at Hillcrest."

"How did Giron come in possession of the check?"

"I gave a picnic for some artist friends of mine, on the twenty-fourth of August, and Giron came out late in the afternoon, just before they were starting back to town. I had not seen him for several years. I heard him say that Judge Carteret was prejudiced against the Unions, and I was afraid he might attempt to hurt him in some way. I knew about the De Marcy case, and that he had a private grudge against the Judge, so I looked up the

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check the Judge had given me and came into town to try to buy Giron to go away."

"The Judge knew of your intention?"

"No; he did n't know that I knew Giron. I offered him the check to go away without harming the Judge, in case the men were convicted."

"He agreed to that?"

"Yes. I agreed to stay in the house with him until the verdict was rendered, and not to tell any one of his whereabouts. We have been staying with my friend, Miss Scarlotti."

The Judge turned to the counsel for the defence.

"Do you wish to cross-examine?"

He did not.

"If the counsel for the defence has any other instructions which they wish given, the Court will consider them now."

The counsel had none. The whole interlude had been to the disadvantage of his clients, and he was to blame for it; his cleverness had overreached itself.

"Mr. Sheriff, take Gaston Giron into custody," ordered Judge Carteret.

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Giron stood in front of the Judge, the sheriff near him. As the officer stepped toward him he whipped out a revolver and shot twice — once at the Judge and then at himself. He choked and doubled up like a withered thing.

The audience was thrown into utter confusion. Women screamed and fainted, and men fought wildly to get out. Scarlotti with a cry threw herself upon Giron, but Cecilia ran to the Judge.

“Are you hurt?” she cried, taking hold of his arm.

“Nothing — a scratch,” he answered, twisting his handkerchief about the wound on his wrist and putting Cecilia aside in his anxiety to prevent a panic.

“Never mind Giron. Block that door, sheriff, till the police get here.”

Richard Barrett sat near the back of the room, and he began pushing people back and calling out that the danger was all over, if they would keep their seats. Fortunately the police came quickly in answer to the door-keeper’s call.

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Cecilia stepped down beside Scarlotti who held Giron in her arms, oblivious to the rest.

"Is he dead?"

"Yes, he 's dead. He 's dead."

"Come away quickly, dear! They will look after him."

"No. I shall stay here with him."

Cecilia looked up at the Judge towering above them all, demanding order. The trial was over as far as she was concerned, the chief witness dead, his ugly lies choked in his throat. She made her way unobserved to the door and went away.

Some fifteen minutes later order was restored, the body of Giron removed, the jurymen back in their places. Judge Carteret said a few words to them in regard to the events of the morning. He said that for his own satisfaction he desired the bribery charge investigated, and the business of that meeting at the Union Club, described by Giron, made public. The rest of the testimony offered by the witness was counteracted by his last mad act, and would go down to his grave with him.

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"The bailiff will conduct the jurymen to consider their verdict," he concluded. "They will take with them the instructions given by the Court. I will remain within call to receive the verdict."

He retired into chambers with a firm step and no signs of the strain of the morning were visible. Richard followed him at once.

"I 'll have a cab outside and we 'll go at once to Dr. Strong and get that arm fixed up."

"It is nothing. Where is Cecilia?"

"Cecilia? Why, where did she go? I lost her in the excitement."

"I was so anxious to prevent a panic that I forgot about the poor child. What a terrible day for her! Go and find out about her, Richard, so we can take her with us."

Richard hurried out to the doorkeeper, but he found no trace of the missing girl.

When the Judge came back into the court room his expression was his usual one of calm dignity. The jurymen filed in and took their places. Those who had remained for the verdict sat on the edge of their chairs, necks craned forward, eyes glistening eagerly. The three

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men whose lives hung in the balance sat like images, save that Conrad constantly wet his dry lips with his tongue, and Martin clasped and unclasped his thumbs.

The foreman of the jury rose in answer to the Court's request for a verdict.

"We the members of the jury do find the prisoners guilty of murder in the second degree."

A sigh went round the room, a wave of exhaled breath, and Conrad tittered in his relief. The bailiff had to rap for quiet to drown the babel that succeeded the quiet. The real interest for the spectators was over, and they barely listened to the closing formalities of the trial, save to comment on the sentence imposed by the Judge: fifteen years for Conrad and ten years for each of the others.

The first moment he could get the Judge away, Richard hurried him to the doctor's office, where to the surprise of everybody, he collapsed entirely.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE HOSPITAL

ONCE out of the court room, Cecilia lost herself in the crowd without so much as a thought of her destination. The reaction after the terrible strain of the last few days left her weak and dizzy. She wanted to get away from the Judge and Richard and all of them and think it out by herself. Giron was dead, so no harm could come to them through him, but she could not forget the surprised horror of the Judge's face when she acknowledged Giron as her father, nor the cold, stern way he had put her aside, in her passionate concern for his safety.

It was as she had foreseen it; the past claimed her again, and the little cabin in the country would never seem home to her, if she had to endure the efforts of all of them to make her feel that nothing was changed, while she knew

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in her heart of hearts that they were trying not to think of her as the child of Giron. She could never go back and feel that horror between herself and them. The Judge might forget, but she never could, that her own father had tried to take her friend's life.

The first time she noticed her surroundings she found that they were entirely strange to her. She asked a policeman where she was and how to get back to Scarlotti's, and then started mechanically in that direction. It really did not matter much what became of her, she thought, and regretted that Giron had not turned his revolver on her.

It was late night when she finally stumbled up the dark stairs to Scarlotti's, and there in front of the door, dropped. At dawn Scarlotti, coming from the death watch over her dead lover, found poor Cecilia and took her in and put her to bed. She sat beside her for some hours, while the girl alternated between deep stupor and wild delirium. She begged to be taken away where Giron could not find her, and she said again and again, "He is my father."

Finally, in alarm, Scarlotti induced a neigh-

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bor to go for a doctor. He pronounced it a nervous collapse and ordered a trained nurse. Scarlotti explained the situation, and suggested that the patient would be more comfortable and better taken care of if she went to a hospital. The doctor agreed, and as neither Scarlotti nor Cecilia had money enough to meet the expense of a private hospital, they took her to the County Hospital.

For a week or ten days the fever had Cecilia in its hot clasp, and she raved day and night about the experiences she had endured since the day of her picnic. Once or twice the doctor nearly despaired of her, but the out-of-doors life at Hillcrest stood her in good stead, and one day she opened her eyes on a new world.

A nurse was bending over her.

"Where am I?"

"Must n't talk."

"Have I been sick?"

"Yes, but you 're better now."

Cecilia looked about. She was in a long whitewashed room, absolutely bare, save for ten beds ranged along the walls. The beds

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were all full, and some of the patients moaned. One woman raved wildly. White-capped nurses were everywhere.

It was a hospital, Cecilia realized; but how she came there, or where she had been, or what had happened to her she could not remember, hard as she tried. She attempted to ask a nurse near her for a drink, but her voice would not come, except in a weak whisper, nor could she lift her hand high enough to attract attention. The effort was too much for her, and she went to sleep before the nurse got to her. When she woke again there were voices beside her bed, one of them vaguely familiar.

"Yes, she is much better, she has had a rational minute or two," said one.

"How much longer will she have to stay here?" asked the other.

"A week, perhaps. It depends on how fast she gets her strength back. As a usual thing it comes slowly after brain fever."

Cecilia after many efforts got her head turned over and looked at them. The one with the familiar voice bent over her.

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"Do you know me, Cecilia? It is Scarlotti."

Cecilia tried to nod and Scarlotti sat down beside her.

"Can't you do anything to stop that maniac?" she asked the nurse, pointing to the raving woman. The nurse shrugged her shoulders.

"She 's worse to-day," she said, passing on.

"Do you feel better?" Scarlotti asked.

"Yes. Have — I — been — sick?" weakly.

"Yes, don't you remember? I found you at the top of the stairs, all in a heap, the day Giron shot himself."

It all came back to her then; all the past flooded in on blinded eyes, and Cecilia groaned and turned away.

"Maybe I ought n't to have told you," Scarlotti began, but one of the nurses came up just then and looked at her patient.

"That 's enough for to-day; she is tired," she said, and led Scarlotti away without another word.

Cecilia wished with all her soul that her friend had never come, that she might have floated on indefinitely in the sort of gray haze of slow-returning consciousness. Now since Scarlotti

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had spoken, all the old thoughts and problems were loosed and tugging at her like furies. The scene in the court room stood out again, photographed on her brain.

"How long have I been here?" she asked a nurse.

"Be quiet; you are not to talk."

From this day, slowly and little by little, Cecilia's strength came back, and she moved into the convalescent ward, where at least she was free from the incessant ravings of the poor woman in the fever ward. At first this great immense room, filled with sick people of all kinds, foreign, colored, the very refuse of the streets, sickened her utterly. But as life tugged at her again and strength came back, she began to take a faint interest in the place. It took her tired thoughts away from their old haunts.

The old colored woman who had the chair next hers poured out her story of past glories in the South, day after day to patient ears; and the old soldier, just up from typhoid, found a sympathetic listener to his long-winded tales. The boy who had just lost a leg in a car smash-up watched each day for the big-eyed silent girl

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and manœuvred to get his chair near hers. She rarely spoke to any one herself, but she listened to them all with sympathy and understanding. Here were "human relationships" such as the Judge must have meant.

The uneventful days slipped away until the doctor prophesied her release at the week-end. She heard him listlessly, and heeded not at all. She had no plans, no desire to grasp life firmly again and make of it something to her taste. When Scarlotti came and heard the news, Cecilia marvelled at her pleasure and listened to her plans for the invalid with surprise. She and Sally Waters had it all arranged that Cecilia was to stop with them until she was strong again, unless she preferred to go back to her "aristocrats," as Scarlotti called her friends at Hillcrest.

"I shall not go back to them; they have forgotten me by this time, I hope."

It was her first mention of the past, and Scarlotti changed the subject rather abruptly.

"I don't know why you should be so good to me, Scarlotti," Cecilia began, but the other woman silenced her at once.

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The day before Cecilia was to leave the hospital Scarlotti came in at the usual time, followed by a visitor. He would have gone on past the white ghost before him, had not Scarlotti stopped and spoken to it.

"Cecilia," he said, "my poor Cecilia!"

She colored hotly and put out her hand.

"It's Gravey," she smiled. "Where did you find him, Scarlotti?"

"He's been worrying the life out of me for a week," she replied, and left them. Saxton looked about him in horror.

"Cecilia, to think of you here!"

"It is n't so bad; I've been almost happy here. It is so easy to lie here and let the days drift by me."

"How could you treat us all so? We have been nearly distracted about you. Richard and the Judge and I have spent every minute looking for you."

"The Judge?"

"Yes, he came to help me, I was so upset."

"Oh!"

"If it had n't been for Miss Scarlotti, we never would have found you."

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"I did not know anything when they brought me here. Scarlotti gave them another name for me, and I have only been myself a little while."

"But you meant to send for us? Tell me that!"

"No, I meant to slip away. I still mean to."

"You can't do it. Now that I have found you, I shall take you back. Anne has a room all ready for you, and we all have orders that you are to be taken to her the minute you are found."

"To Anne, and Bobby?" cried Cecilia, and then buried her face in her hands.

"Yes, back to the Lodge, where we can take care of you, my dearest dear."

"I can't go — it can never be the same now. Don't tempt me!" Cecilia answered him.

"Not the same? Why, what difference is there between now and the day you left us?"

"You all know who I am, now."

"Yes, thanks be, we do. Only we've known all along what you were — the sweetest woman on this earth."

"No, no! it must make some difference.

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Anne can't want Bobby to play with me, now that she knows what my father did."

"Cecilia, how absurd! how morbid! Why not forget about poor Giron? He's gone to his account, and in a month the world will have forgotten that he lived."

Scarlotti came back and joined them.

"I've got to confess, Cecilia, that Mr. Barrett and Mr. Graves and Judge Carteret came to me a week ago to get me to help find you, but I made up my mind that I would not let them see you until I knew whether you wanted to go back to them again."

"Dear old Scarlotti! And how did you know that I did want to?"

"I knew you were breaking your heart over it by the way you said, 'They have forgotten me by this time, I hope.' "

"Cecilia!" protested Saxton.

"I soon saw that this fellow was breaking his heart over your leaving them, so I said to myself, 'Here is a case of two hearts that should beat as one, Scarlotti, so don't you be the one to play the human barrier'; and then I just told him

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about the hospital, and I could hardly keep him quiet until the visitors' hour."

"I've been practically a madman since the day you left," he said simply.

Cecilia put out her hand to him and he clasped it in both of his.

"You dear Saxton Graves!" was all that she could say.

"Dear, Miss Scarlotti is right, these two hearts of ours are incomplete. Can't you give me the right to love you and take care of you always?"

"Oh, I don't love you enough, Saxton."

"Oh, but you will after we are married. I love you so, Cecilia, that you would have to care a little."

"Say 'yes,' and be glad of his protection," said Scarlotti bluntly.

Cecilia turned her head away from them and a tear trickled down her cheek and tumbled off her chin.

"What a brute I am," said Saxton, "bothering you to death with my feelings. Forget it all, dear. We have all of time to talk about it, and that is none too much."

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"What about to-morrow, Cecilia? Will you come home to Sally and me a while, or do you want to go back to the country?" Scarlotti asked.

"She is too weak to decide for herself, Miss Scarlotti, so let us decide for her by saying that she will go to the country to-morrow and stay at the Lodge until she gets strong and then you and Miss Waters will come out to her cabin and take charge of her for a while."

"Hear him, the prospective domestic tyrant! Look out for him, Cecilia! He's a risk!"

"Anne and I will come for you to-morrow morning early."

"She cannot be ready until afternoon."

"Very well, then, at one o'clock."

"You and Anne?" Cecilia asked.

"Yes, if we can beat the others off. If not, Bobby, Rich, Judge Carteret, Bridget O'Brien, Omar, Anne, and myself will call for you and take you home."

"Home! think of it — home! Oh, I wish I could take all these pitiful derelicts in that ward home with me. They have n't any place at all, most of them."

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"Visitors' hour is over," announced the head nurse.

"Do you mean to say I have to go, when I've just come?" demanded Saxton.

"They are very strict," Cecilia smiled, "and it will not be very long until to-morrow."

"I warn you that after to-morrow I shall move from the big house to the Lodge."

"I shan't mind," Cecilia smiled.

"That is the most loving thing she ever said to me!" Saxton exclaimed; at which they laughed, and the head nurse marched them all off without another word.

The next twenty-four hours were like a dream to Cecilia. When she looked back at them later she could scarcely remember what did happen. Her farewell to the patients in the convalescent ward stood out in her memory against her own new-found happiness.

She had herself wheeled the entire length of the room and had a word or two with all of them. She took the names and probable whereabouts of some of them, in the hope of seeing them again. Human derelicts, that was what

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they were, cheerful in the face of ill health and abject poverty, with never a fear of the morrow, when the hospital authorities would set them out on the street. The old colored woman mourned bitterly over Cecilia's departure, and the boy who had lost his leg choked when he said good-bye.

"It's kind of hard fer a feller like me to keep a stiff upper lip and think about gettin' on without a leg all the rest of my life. The doc says as soon as I can save enough to get me a corker I'll be most as good as ever, but if it had n't 'a been fer you, I guess I'd 'a — It's hard enough fer a two-legged feller to git along, let alone a one-legger!"

"I want you to let me know two or three days before you come out of the hospital, Johnny. This is my name and address. You and I have not seen the last of one another by a good bit. If I've helped you, you've helped me. When I was so discouraged I wanted to die, I used to look over at you and say, 'What a coward you are! Just look at Johnny!'"

"Honest, did you? Ain't that queer?"

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That's what I was allus sayin' to myself about you!"

"We helped one another. I won't say 'good-bye,' only '*Aufwiedersehen*.'"

When she finally got to bed she fell asleep like a baby, tired and happy; and it was only a minute until she was dressed and waiting, all a-quiver for their coming, all a-wonder as to who would come. Would it be just the same, as Saxton said? Could anything ever be just the same a second time?

When she saw Anne's face as she came toward her down the hall, when she felt Anne's arms about her, it was too much, the relief was too intense, and she sobbed her happy heart out on the other woman's breast.

"Cecilia, you dear wicked Cecilia!" Anne half laughed, half cried.

"Anne, Anne!" sobbed Cecilia.

"Bless me! I have so many messages that I can't begin to deliver them. Bobby and Richard and Omar clamored to come; but Saxton was firm, he said we were enough."

"Where is he?" Cecilia asked.

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"Down in the machine. I made him let me come up alone. My dear, my dear, we shall be so glad to get you back home again!"

"It seems like heaven to go back — to have you want me."

"Bobby has spent every minute since Saxton telephoned us yesterday, decorating your room; and I told him before I left that I was sure there would not be space left for you unless he stopped."

Cecilia's face quivered and she clung to Anne's hand, fighting back her tears. Scarlotti came in at this minute with a large bunch of flowers.

"Thought I'd see you safely off," she said, presenting the mammoth bouquet.

"Scarlotti, how lovely!" cried Cecilia. "What have I done that everybody should be so good to me? No one will ever know, Anne, what Scarlotti has been to me, what she has done for me, the days I have been shut up in this place."

"Nonsense! Just dropped in every day to say 'hello' to an old pal. I don't call that much, do you, Mrs. Barrett?"

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"Yes, I call that a good deal."

The nurses came in to say good-bye, and as Cecilia thanked them she gave each of them one of Scarlotti's flowers. They finally got her downstairs and into the machine, where Saxton waited impatiently. Good-byes were said to Scarlotti, farewells waved to the old colored woman and Johnny, and then they were off toward the country.

Cecilia lay back on the cushions and watched things speed by her.

"Is it really me?" she asked once.

"It is just enough of you to begin work on," laughed Saxton. "When you have had a few of Bridget O'Brien's good meals there will be more of you."

"I don't need meals. Just being back and seeing the trees and the water and the sky and you all — that is all I need."

"The Judge said to-day before he left —"

"Before he left?" Cecilia echoed him.

"Did n't you tell her, Anne? The doctor ordered him to French Lick instanter for a rest and the baths. He went down to-day."

"Oh."

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"He wanted Saxton to go with him, but the selfish brute refused. He says he has to keep guard over you at the Lodge."

"I won't run away again."

Cecilia tried to smile at their banter, but her face was stiff. It had made a difference, then, with the Judge. He never would have left the very day of her return unless he wanted to put off their meeting. Well, she had known all these last hours that her happiness was too complete to last. There had to be some blow to mar the perfectness.

"How tired you look all at once, dear!" Anne said. "I shall put you to bed the minute we get home."

"Not before I've seen Bobby?" pleadingly.

"My dear, I could no more keep Bobby from you than I could keep the moon from the sky. I think you had better not talk now until we get there."

Cecilia was only too glad of the quiet. She watched the country run by and tried to calm her disturbed thoughts. Why should she suppose he would wait to welcome her? What right had she to hope that she would make any

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difference in his life? She would say nothing to any one about her plans, but she would get away from Hillcrest before he came back. She could never stay on under any conditions save the old ones of friendly, natural intercourse. They turned into the village, whizzed through it, and on to the road that led to Hillcrest. Anne turned to Cecilia with a smile.

"Almost there," she said.

"My heart is beating so, I think it will burst my body," Cecilia answered.

The top of the Lodge appeared above the trees, and beside the road, out in front, sat a boy and a dog on watch. As the machine came in sight they rushed toward it, shouting and barking. Saxton pulled up at the stepping block, and before he or Anne could offer to help Cecilia she was out and down on the sidewalk in a heap, her arms about both boy and dog, and she kissed and hugged them both indiscriminately, weeping as if her heart would break.

"I'm crying because I am so glad!" she explained.

Bobby fought back his own tears and patted

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her fondly, while Omar saluted her face and neck.

"We decowated a good deal, Omar an' me; an'— an'— dear, dear 'Fwaid lady, why did you wun away?" he ended up.

"I 've run back now, Boy, and I 'll never go again without you and Omar."

"This excitement will never do," said Saxton, sternly. Whereupon he stooped down, disentangled boy and dog, and picked Cecilia up in his arms and carried her into the house and upstairs, laughing and protesting faintly.

"'T is hersilf, God bless her!" cried Bridget O'Brien. "Wilcome home agin, darlin'!"

Cecilia held out her hand unable to speak, and Saxton put her down on the bed. He touched her cheek with his lips and went away without a word. Anne took charge at once. She shut them all out, got Cecilia undressed and into the cool, fragrant bed. The room was a perfect bower of flowers, and a puff of white clouds, and a patch of blue sky peeped in at the windows, with tree-tops in between.

"Richard is coming out early, so you are to

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have a nice nap before he arrives, and we'll all have our coffee up here with you after dinner, because I am not going to let you get up again to-night."

"All right. I never want to move again," Cecilia sighed.

There came a gentle knock at the door.

"Mudder, tan me an' Omar sit by de 'Fwaid lady if we pwomise not to talk or move out loud?"

"Well, come in a minute," Anne said.

They tiptoed in.

"Now I have to go and speak to Bridget, so you may stay fifteen minutes if you're extra, extra good."

After Anne left them Bobby drew his chair close beside the bed and sat silent, holding Cecilia's hand.

"Oh, I forgot," he said, sliding off his chair. In a moment he came back with a little black teakwood vase containing a single white waxen "Dutchman's pipe." "I pwomised de Judge I would give it to you. He found it for you in de woods."

"Oh, Bobby, Bobby!" she cried ecstatically,

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sitting up and seizing the vase. "He has remembered me! he has!"

If nurse Anne had been there she would have been scandalized at the subsequent behavior of her patient, for Cecilia and Bobby had a rough-and-tumble hugging match, and Omar seized the occasion to jump upon the bed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE JUDGE COMES HOME

THE days of Cecilia's convalescence at the Lodge were golden ones for the girl, who had never been "looked after" in all her vagabond life. The whole household turned on her wish as a pivot, and each member of the household vied with the others in originating things that might add to her comfort or pleasure.

It was amusing to see Bridget O'Brien come into Cecilia's bedroom about ten o'clock in the morning with a tray of delicious breakfast, the floral decorations done by Bobby.

"'T is a foine marnin', miss. I hope I see ye well."

"Of course I 'm well. It's absurd for me to lie here and put you to all this trouble."

"Thrubble, is ut? 'T is the joy of me heart to git somebody down sick so I can nurse thim. Such a healthy lot as the Barretts are, miss, I niver git a chanst at thim."

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"Bridget, you old fraud!" laughed Cecilia.

"'T is the truth I'm tellin' ye —'t is I that loves the nursin'."

"I would just like some of those poor souls at the hospital to have one day of your nursing."

"You're to ate ivry moutful av this now, an' thin, maybe, we'll let ye get up for luncheon."

On some days she sailed in with the most determined air and announced that it was raining and damp, and that Cecilia was to spend the day in her bed. Once Bridget O'Brien decreed her fate, there was no begging off, and they all laughingly obeyed the "White Czar," as Richard called her.

Bobby and Omar were in the seventh heaven of delight over her return, and they spent hours each day with her. As for Bobby's offerings, they were many and strange.

When she was well enough to go down into the hammock on the veranda, Anne would take her sewing and sit with her, and sometimes Bobby would offer to tell them stories. They always accepted joyfully, and he poured out his boyish fancies, his innermost little self for their fond inspection. One day after some such re-

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cital, Bobby rushed off to meet the Judge's man with the mail.

"A mind like Bobby's is just as interesting as a grown-up mind; more so, because what Bobby expresses is so true to himself, so unaffected by training and public opinion and experience," Cecilia commented.

"I suppose we grown-ups scarcely know what is truth with us, we are so unconsciously influenced by those very things."

Bobby ran back to them. "Letter for you, mudder," he cried.

"Oh, from the Judge," Anne said.

Cecilia looked away pensively while Anne read it.

"Splendid! he's coming home."

"Hurrah, Omar, de Judge is toming!" shouted Bobby. "When is he — when?"

"To-day; he will be out to dinner to-night."

"To-night?" said Cecilia, half rising.

"Yes. Is n't that jolly? We must do something to celebrate his coming. How nice it will be to have our whole family home again and together!"

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Cecilia made no reply and Anne glanced at her in surprise.

"Are n't you glad, dear?"

"Yes — oh, yes."

"Cecilia, you are not offended because the Judge has only written you once?"

"Of course not. Why should he write to me?"

Saxton came in sight from the big house, waving a letter.

"Have you heard the good news?" he cried.

"Yes, we got a letter too. What shall we do to celebrate?"

"How are you, lady fair?" he asked, dropping a rose in Cecilia's lap.

"I 'm fine," she answered.

"Strong enough to come to our house for dinner? I think it would be fine to have a feast there."

"Oh, no, please," Cecilia said impulsively.

"You do not want to go?" Anne asked.

"If you 'll excuse me — you all go and let me stay here. I 'm not quite strong enough yet."

"A celebration without you? Well, I guess

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not. Not if we have to hold it at your bedside," rejoined Saxton.

"I wish you would leave me out," she sighed.

Anne looked at her anxiously and hastened to say, "We'll do just as you like, dear, only it would be a disappointment to the Judge not to see you for a minute at least. Suppose we have the party here, Saxton, and then she can slip away when she is tired."

"In de darden, mudder?" inquired Bobby.

"No, sir, it is too cold for our invalid to dine out of doors now."

"You see, I'm spoiling it all. Do have it without me."

"Nonsense, you goose. I'll go and confer with Bridget; Saxton, you call up Richard and tell him to meet the Judge at the train; Bobby, you begin on a color scheme for floral decorations."

She took Bobby in with her.

"Don't you feel so well to-day, dearest?" Saxton asked.

"Yes, I am all right."

"Won't it be great to have the Judge home again? He's a prince. You have no idea how

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he came to the rescue when we were looking for you. He never spared himself night or day, he left no stone unturned just to help me find you."

Cecilia's chin quivered, but she made no answer.

"He wrote me a note, Saxton. I've meant to show it to you, but —" She took the envelope out of her dress and handed it to him.

"Am I to read it?"

"Please."

"My dear Cecilia:

"Letters from home tell me that you are established in royal state at the Lodge and that you are better. You gave us all many heartaches while you were away.

"I shall look forward to seeing you when I come back to Hillcrest, and I only want to send you a line, wishing you all happiness and good fortune. Saxton is a fine fellow, my dear, and he loves you with all his manly heart.

"Get well soon, my dear Cecilia,

"Your devoted friend,

"PETER CARTERET."

"That is a bully letter, is n't it?" Saxton exclaimed, when he had finished it.

"What did you write to him about — us?"

"I don't know. I said a lot about you, so I

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suppose he took it for granted that we'd fixed it up."

"Anne and Richard are taking it for granted, too, Saxton. Are you?"

"I suppose in a way I am, dear. I have n't said anything more to you about it because you did n't want me to, and I realize that you are not very strong yet, so I've let it rest.

"You know how it is with me, Cecilia, and has been ever since the first moment I met you. You have been so gentle and sweet to me, since you came back, that I've been hoping that you care — a little."

"I see. I've been so glad just to drift since I came back. I have n't looked life in the face yet, at all. I have n't wanted to decide anything, and I see that I have not been fair to you, Saxton."

"Never mind about that."

"But I do mind. I have grown to be so fond of you, to rely so upon your friendship, that I cannot think of myself robbed of them. And yet, I know perfectly well that I do not love you as I must love the man I marry."

"How can you know how you'll love him?"

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How can you be sure that this is n't the real thing that you feel for me?"

"I know, but I can't tell you how."

"Don't decide now, Cecilia. Let it wait until you are stronger."

"I can't let you think that it is settled; it can never be settled that way, dear."

"I should ask so little, Cecilia, just the affection that you have for me now."

"I could not endure that. It must be all or nothing with me; and there is another man in my thoughts —"

He rose and stood beside her, tall and fine, his face flushed.

"Cecilia, you mean that you love another man?"

"It is all settled," called Anne, as she came out to join them. "Dinner here at seven. Have you called Richard yet, Saxton? I shall take Cecilia girl off to rest, or she will be a wreck from over-excitement."

"I'll go call Richard now," Saxton answered, and left them.

"Why, what's the matter with him? Cecilia, have you been abusing him?"

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“No.”

Once in her own room there was no thought of sleep in Cecilia's mind. When she thought of meeting the Judge, her heart fluttered wildly, and she dreaded it. The next moment she knew that she could scarcely wait until his coming. She hated herself for her excitement. This man had shown her in every possible way that he intended to put their relations on another basis. He had fairly thrust her aside that day in the court room; he had left Hillcrest the day she was to return; he had sent her merely a formal letter of welcome, in which he calmly handed her over to another man; and yet at the very thought of him her blood surged into her head.

Not by a flick of the eyelash should she show him how things were with her, and as soon as she could she would find some excuse to get away. She had, as he said, brought them many heart-aches. . . . Why should she run away? Why not marry Saxton, since they all wanted it so much. Saxton would be satisfied with what she could give him — she struck that idea from her mind with a blow. Round and round her thoughts went, and over and again she re-

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leaved her waiting with the Judge, her usual formal greeting, her quiet assurance. When Anne came to help her to dress for dinner she had not changed her eyes.

"Thanked, dear?"

"Yes, I thank you."

"You are to wear that with just a slight change and I wish you would let me do your hair, will you?"

"Oh, no, dear. Only it does not make much difference how I look, Anne."

"I have always longed to get my hands on your hair," Anne said, brushing out the long wavy, black locks, scattering away all the time with the pointed and curled Carolina hair pins a soft mass of curly gold. It was strikingly becoming because it seemed to soften her whole face. The finger had pulled her down, and her face was now and then, with a certain look of sympathy as if she pined for her, and her hair seemed to accommodate the quality.

When she was finally ready Anne put a soft clinging pink serge gown on her, that fell about her in long straight lines. She pinned a pink rose in her hair and then let Carolina to the

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long glass. A slow color crept up to the girl's hair as she looked at herself there.

"Do you see how beautiful you are?" Anne asked softly.

"It's you, Anne, you did it to me."

"You goose! I knew all along what murder you were doing to your good looks with that old straight white blouse."

"What blouse? Oh, that was another woman who wore a white blouse."

"It does n't seem as if you could be the same person who came to see us that first day we were at the Lodge," Anne said, looking at her wonderingly. "Well, we loved the old one too," laughed Anne, turning to go downstairs. Cecilia promised to come down at once, but when Anne had left she sat down by her window and looked off across the woods toward the cabin. She thought over all the times she had spent with Judge Carteret, all the talks they had had, all the experiences they had shared, from the first night he found her in his library up to the night she went away. She got herself in hand so that Bobby's warning shout and Omar's barking did not quite cause her heart to suffocate her.

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Presently Richard ran around under her window. "Hello, Cecilia!" he called. "Come on down. He's here."

"In just a moment," she answered him. Then, before she could go down, the carriage drove up to the big house. Anne ran up and said the Judge had gone up to the house a moment, but would be right back.

"Why didn't you come down?" she asked.

"He was gone by the time Richard called me," she replied evasively.

"Well, come along. They'll be back in a minute."

"I'll be right down."

Richard shouted to her on his way to dress, and Bobby and Omar made for the big house, but still she sat by her window and could not get herself to go down. After a few minutes she heard some one coming down the path and she peered out. It was the Judge coming back alone. Here was her time to see him without the others about, to guess how her heart beat. She slipped downstairs and got to the door just as he came up the steps. He stopped at the sight of her and stared.

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"Judge Peter," she just breathed; she could not think of the much rehearsed greeting.

"Cecilia! Why, Cecilia!" he cried. "How beautiful you have grown to be!"

He took both her hands and she felt the blood flood her face and neck, and she fairly choked with joy at his words.

"But you, Judge Carteret, you're not well yourself."

They sat down opposite one another at the end of the veranda, and Cecilia's heart beat so loud that she thought every moment he would speak of it.

"I'm all right — tell me about yourself."

"There's nothing much to tell. They have all been so good to me and spoiled me so, and —"

She broke off, disconcerted by his steady gazing at her.

"You're so changed, Cecilia. What is it that has gone out of your face? What is it that has dawned there?"

"Have you — did you have a pleasant time at the Springs?"

"Where? Oh, at the Springs. No, I hated the place."

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"Why did you go, then?"

"I had to go somewhere!"

"Why?"

He looked away a moment, the tired, old look coming into his eyes.

"I had to because —"

"I understand," she said to him gently.

He leaned toward her quickly.

"You did — you knew? Then that makes it easier all around, does n't it? If I had known that you would understand, I need not have gone. I might have spared myself those wretched days down there in the country. Does Saxton know too?"

"Saxton?"

"Yes. Can he find it in his heart to make some allowance for me? His happiness, perhaps, will make him understand."

He broke off, and Cecilia was so dazed that she made no attempt to speak.

"He's a fine fellow, Cecilia, and I have wanted this to happen all along. It was only when I knew that — that — You love him very much, my dear? He loves you as few women are loved."

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"Oh, please — please —" said Cecilia.

"Well, here you are! I thought you were still in your room, so I've been waiting for you," Saxton called, coming up. "Hello! Why, Cecilia, how lovely you look!"

"I have just been telling her how beautiful her new happiness has made her."

"Oh, but, Judge, you must n't —" began Saxton in answer to the appeal Cecilia threw him.

Anne came out and joined them, and so the intended explanation was not made.

"Is n't it fine to be all together again?" Anne asked. "I declare, the Lodge has been so gay with returning wanderers that we never shall be able to settle down again."

"I think French Lick about finished the Judge," Richard said.

"I have had a hard summer, in many ways," the Judge remarked. "I shall stay out here a week and see what Hillcrest can do for me."

"We will play all day long, won't we, Judge?" Bobby asked, climbing into his lap.

"We will try to forget our old age."

For the first part of the evening Cecilia was so white and still that Anne felt quite worried

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about her. The dinner was strained somehow, the Judge seemed depressed, Saxton nervous, Cecilia dumb. Richard and Bobby tried to keep things going, and finally Bobby appealed to Cecilia.

“ ‘Fwaid lady, please talk.”

After that Cecilia talked incessantly. The Quarter, the hospital, all the patients in the different wards, the books she had read since she came back to the country, they simply could not stop her, nor even stem the tide of talk.

The Judge pleaded a headache as an excuse for an early good-night, and as they watched him disappear with Saxton, Anne said, “What was the matter with everybody? I never knew anything as queer as we were, not a bit like ourselves.”

“I think I will go to bed, if you don’t mind,” said Cecilia, and left them precipitately. Later, about midnight, when Anne and Richard went up to bed, Anne stopped at Cecilia’s door to see if she wanted anything. She could have sworn she heard the girl sobbing as she came up the stairs, but when she spoke to her she got no answer.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE WATERS OF REFRESHMENT

THE day after the Judge's return, Cecilia began to try her strength in short walks about the garden. The first day she was able to, she slipped into the woods, without a word to any one, and went to the cabin. Omar was lying before the door in the sun, and sprang up to welcome her.

"It is all just the same — nothing changed except me."

She and Omar went in together and sat for a long time in silence, talking to one another. Finally she spoke aloud:

"He has been home a week, Omar, and it has been long enough to prove to me that I cannot stay on here. I spend all my time trying to avoid him, and everybody wonders at us. They are all determined to marry me to Saxton, and if I stay much longer I'll do it, and lose all respect for myself forever."

The Waters of Refreshment

Omar stood on his hind feet, and put his paws on her shoulders, protesting at such an idea, with his affectionate brown eyes.

"Are n't you glad you are n't a lady, Omar? Are n't you happy because you know you have n't any complex emotional machinery inside of you, that is liable to get out of gear at any minute, and upset you entirely?"

He buried his nose in her lap, in an ecstasy of sympathy.

"Dear old fellow, I wish you could advise me what to do. Why could n't things have gone on just as they were before Giron came? Why must life always be a series of climaxes? You get over one, and the next one catches you."

She went about the room, handling things that had grown dear to her, flicking the dust off the furniture, opening the cupboard. "Remember the night Mrs. Grantley came to rescue us? Was n't it funny?"

He barked his amused recollection.

"And the first time the Judge came to call, with Bobby. How strange to look back to a time when there was no Judge and no Bobby."

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At Bobby's name Omar went to the door to see if his playmate was at hand.

"No, he's not there. He has gone to town for the day with Saxton and Judge Carteret," she explained to him. "It nearly broke his heart to leave us behind, but we finally got him off. Dear, loyal Bobby, how awful it would have been if we had lost him that day he fell off the cliff, Omar. He's been a wonderful influence in our lives, hasn't he, old fellow?"

After a while she went out and wandered toward the big house. All the times she had gone along that little path came back to her. The cold winter days when she had tramped through the snow, the wet spring days when the ground was soggy. She thought of the games she had played with herself on the veranda.

"What a child I must have been then, Omar!"

The big house looked deserted, its doors and windows all hospitably open. She climbed up to the studio, with a sudden longing to see her unfinished work. It was a far climb, and she had to sit down twice and rest. When finally she reached the workshop she sank down on the couch, worn out.

The Waters of Refreshment

Nothing had been touched there, everything was as she had left it — her apron on the floor, her brushes and palette on the table. She sat a long while looking at her uncompleted work, in a sort of languid way, as if she were an outsider. She felt none of the throb and pulse of creative force within her, none of the old longing to be up and at it again. A vague feeling of wonder came over her that she had done this thing.

“I think I shall never want to paint any more, Omar,” she assured him.

She stretched out on the couch, her head on her crossed arms, and studied her work. Omar lay at her feet and waited. Art bored him. Through the open windows the sun streamed in, and the late summer sounds of locust and cricket filled the air drowsily. The pictured hosts on the decorative frieze grew fainter and fainter to Cecilia’s eyes, and finally disappeared altogether.

Half an hour later the Judge, who had given up the trip to town at the last moment, came out of his study and met Omar on the way downstairs from the studio. The Judge had spent an

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unprofitable hour in trying to read a legal treatise, and had given it up.

"Where have you been, Omar?" he asked, glancing up at the studio stairs. Omar went on down and the Judge paused before he followed him. He had never been in the studio since Cecilia left, he could not bear the thought of the place without her, but to-day he felt an impulse to go up. Perhaps up there he could summon the old, the vanished Cecilia.

He marched up, and got well into the middle of the room, before he saw her there asleep. He turned to go away, changed his mind, and sat down on a step of the ladder that led up to the trestle. He sat where he could see her face clearly, and he gazed at it a long time, wondering if this could be the passionate boyish creature he had found here a few months before.

The girl before him was in the first bloom of early womanhood, when the chrysalis of girlishness, "like the winter garments of repentance," have been cast into the fire of spring. The long, sinuous lines of her figure were revealed by the white gown she wore. Her face, which a few months ago was startling in its look of excita-

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bility, had been smoothed out and softened. These weeks of tender care and devotion had brought an expression of gentleness, that was very sweet.

She was beautiful, this girl-woman, the Judge thought. Her hair curled so softly back from her brow, and the fever had left her skin white, tinged with faint pink. Her lips were parted in a half-smile. The Judge dropped his face on his hands and sat so, for a while. Then he rose to go.

"I'd better get away," he whispered to himself.

At the sound of his moving, Cecilia opened her eyes. She did not speak or move, she lay still and looked at him, as he stood and looked down at her. Finally, she could bear it no longer, and turned her head away from him.

"I have come up for the first time since you went away," he said.

"Why did you come to-day?"

"I came because the old Cecilia, who came up here to paint, belonged to me. She was a part of my life. I thought perhaps I might summon her back. The new Cecilia belongs to —"

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"You miss the old Cecilia?"

"More than I can say."

There was silence between them for several minutes.

"I shall never finish it," she said, indicating the frieze.

"Somehow I should not want you to finish it now."

"Why not?"

"Oh, well, possibly Saxton will not want you to paint," he replied evasively.

"Saxton, Saxton, always Saxton," she muttered.

"What did you say about Saxton?" he said, not understanding.

"What is there to say about him? I never can get away from him, and when he goes away for a day, and I think I am free, you all of you din his name in my ears."

She rose angrily, and the Judge stared in amazement.

"Why are you so determined to make me marry him? What have I done, that I must be disposed of to somebody? I am just as much myself as ever, just as able to make my own way

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and live my own life. Why do you all insist on giving me to Saxton?"

"Cecilia, I thought —" began the Judge.

"What difference does it make what I want? You, none of you consider me at all. Here is a man who loves me, and marry him I must, willy-nilly."

"Cecilia, what are you saying?"

"I am saying that I cannot stay here any longer, that you are all forcing me to go away. I understand how you feel about me. I don't see how you could feel any other way about Giron's daughter."

"What has Giron to do with it?"

"He has everything to do with it, has n't he? He has changed everything between us."

"Giron? Between you and me? What do you mean?"

"After what he did, after the revelations that day in court! I understood why you went away the day I came back to the Lodge. I knew you wanted me to see that things could never be the same again —"

The Judge stopped her, his face white with feeling.

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"You mean to say that you thought I went away because of Giron? You mean that you did not understand why I could not be here when you came?"

"But I did understand, and I knew you were right."

"Cecilia Carné, I went away to give Saxton his chance."

"To give Saxton — his — chance?" she repeated dully.

"He loved you so, and I thought you had grown to care for him."

"You went away because —"

"Because I loved you so that I could not bear to be here and see your happiness."

She faced him, her eyes blazing.

"And you helped try to marry me to him. You have made me endure the agony of this week."

"I thought you wanted him. I wanted only your happiness."

"And you never would have told me — you would have stood by, and let me marry him?"

"My dear, you are twenty-five years old, and I am forty-five. What have I to offer a girl?"

The Waters of Refreshment

"You have the Kingdom of Heaven to offer her, in your love!"

"Cecilia, Cecilia, are you telling me that you would listen? Are you bound to Saxton now?"

"I have never been bound to him. I have told him again and again that it could never be, that I do not love him. He understands."

The Judge put his two hands on her shoulders and looked into her eyes.

"Cecilia Carné, from the first moment I saw you, you have been the very vein of my heart!"

She tried to speak, to answer him, but she could not. Her hands crept to his shoulders, clasped behind his head. He kissed her hair, her brow, her lips, her eyes.

"Cecilia, Cecilia, is it true that life holds this wonderful thing for me?" he whispered.

"Say for us, Judge Peter! I love you so! I love you so! All this long dreadful week, I have thought I should die unless I could tell you how I love you."

"Beloved, and I have spent the week trying to steel myself to the thought of you as another man's wife."

"Blind, blind Peter! How could you have

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looked at me and not known? Why, even Omar knew."

"Dear old Omar! he sent me to you." And he told her of the meeting on the stairs and how Omar had sent him to the studio. "We will make a wonderful studio up here, heart's dearest, because I found both my Cecílias here, the old and the new."

"And both Cecílias love you, love you! You have to love me, Judge Peter, because I am a thing of your making. Do you remember what you said once about love being like a pool, where all the world could come and be healed? 'The waters of refreshment,' you called it."

He kissed her for reply.

"I remember I resented the idea, because I thought it belittled Love and made it commonplace."

"And now, beloved?"

"Now, I want to share this glory with all the world, as I would a sunrise, a mirage, a comet. Miracles are for the many, not the elect."

"Love is the greatest teacher of them all," said Judge Peter, tenderly.

The Waters of Refreshment

After a long time they went downstairs, and the Judge telephoned to Anne that Cecilia was to take lunch at the big house, and asked her to join them. She begged off on plea of some special duties, and warned him not to let Cecilia get too tired. When he came back his face was beaming.

"She can't come!" he said triumphantly.

Cecilia laughed gayly.

"Inhospitable man!"

"I need one day to get used to this 'wonderfulness,' one day with you, Cecilia."

They lunched together merrily; at least food was put before them. They were too absorbed in one another to notice. They spent the afternoon in glorious dreams for the future, and then wandered over to the Lodge to invite everybody to dinner at the Judge's.

"Of course we'll come," Anne said. "It's a shame Saxton can't be here. He's got to stay in town; he's sending Bobby out with Richard. How much better you do look, Judge," she said, suddenly struck by the new look of youth and vigor.

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"I feel so well, so content with the world! I am just about Bobby's age!"

"It is wonderful what Hillcrest does for people. You looked a million years old when you went to French Lick."

The Judge laughed and left her. She ran up to Cecilia's door, but there came no answer to her tap; and when she peeped in, she heard Cecilia's regular breathing, so she backed gently out. The minute the door closed the sleeper sat up, and wafted her a kiss.

"I could not have kept it from you, you old darling, if you had come in; and we do so want it a surprise for dinner."

She bounced back on her pillow and tried to rest, but her eyes were wide open, and her lips were curved in a continual smile. When she came down later, dressed for dinner, Anne stared at her.

"Cecilia Carné, you look like another woman. What have you done to yourself?"

"What's the matter with me?"

"You've looked so sad lately, and now you look so blooming and so happy!"

"Life at the Lodge, dear."

The Waters of Refreshment

Richard and Anne led the way, arm in arm, and Cecilia and Bobby and Omar followed.

"Cecilia, I suppose you won't be able to eat a mouthful, because Saxton is n't here," Richard teased her.

"Richard, I won't have you make fun of him, dear old thing."

"'Dear old thing'— Did you get that, Anne? He's staying in town because she's been abusing him; and now she's sorry."

"Bidgie says you're doin' to mawwy Gwavey; an' I said no, you was doin' to marry me an' Omar."

Their shout of laughter brought the Judge to the steps.

"Is n't he stunning?" Anne asked.

"What a cheerful party I have!" he called to them.

"We are probably the most cheerful, egotistical, stuck-on-ourselves-and-each-other set of idiots this side of Crazy Crag!" Richard answered.

"Where is Cwazy Cwags?"

"The home of the luny, my son, the bailiwick of the half-wits."

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They chaffed and they laughed until dinner was announced, and each one privately decided that the others were all at their best. Cecilia was the merriest of them all, and Bobby nearly threw them into hysterics with an account of his day in town with Saxton.

When the coffee was served and the servants had left the room, the Judge turned toward Cecilia and she nodded to him, blushing vividly.

"Dear good friends of mine," their host began, "I have a secret, a wonderful secret, which I want you to share with me. It is one I cannot keep, and yet I find it difficult to tell. The most delightful thing is going to happen at Hillcrest!"

"Judge, you are not in love?" cried Anne.

"There you have it in a nutshell. I am most utterly in love, and I am loved. I ask you to my wedding, here and now."

"Do we know the lady, Judge? Who is she?" Richard asked.

"Who is she? Who should she be, but Cecilia?"

"Cecilia?" came the astonished chorus.

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Cecilia went and stood beside him and he put his arm about her.

"I 've always loved him, but I found out only to-day that he had always loved me."

"But Saxton?" said tender-hearted Anne.

"Saxton knows. I told him I loved somebody else. He has been so fine about it, dear old Saxton!"

"It is so much too good to be true, that I can't believe it!" Richard said.

"To think I did n't see it!" Anne lamented.

Bobby slid off his chair and went to Cecilia.

"Is de Judge doin' to marry my 'Fwaid lady?"

"Not the 'Fraid lady any more, Boy; you must find a new name for me."

"What name?"

"Mrs. Judge Peter!" she blushed, and joined in the laugh.

It was indeed a cheerful party that went back to the Lodge late that night. Richard carried Bobby, who had stayed up by special dispensation; Anne walked with her arm across her husband's shoulders; Cecilia and her Judge brought

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up the rear. The whole procession was lighted on its way by the "inconstant moon."

Cecilia whispered something to the Judge and he laughed gayly. She smiled up at him.

"Who is this big boy Peter, that I am going to marry?"

He leaned over and kissed her.

"The waters of refreshment and the fountain of youth are one, beloved."

"They must be held in the hollowed hand of God!" Cecilia answered him.

THE END



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